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COUNTESS AND GERTRUDE;

OR,

MODES OF DISCIPLINE.

BY

LÆTITIA-MATILDA HAWKINS.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

Pourquoi ne pas écrire? cela interesse davantage. Ecrivez ce que vous avez vu.—Mon ami M. Gray disoit que si l'on étoit content d'écrire exactement ce qu'on avoit vu, sans apprêt, sans ornement, sans chercher à briller, on auroit plus de lecteurs que les meilleurs auteurs.

LORD ORFORD.

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THE
COUNTESS AND GERTRUDE;

OR,

MODES OF DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER XLV.

A little evil productive of much good. A kind attempt. Temptation resisted. A morning-call. A system of reading. Great indulgences. The Linnæan system. Leverian Museum. A neat girl. The curiosity of the foolish. The taunts of the jealous. An apoplexy. An irreparable loss. Misery. Insensibility. A pious daughter to a venerable father.

THE unaccountable attempt to deprive Gertrude of an innocent enjoyment and a valuable acquisition, and the means used to accomplish it, though never in any way referred to by Mr. Sterling, had a very serious effect on his mind; and the spirit that had dictated to him, stood before his judgment invested in darker colors than its own. His niece had been nothing more than jealous; he presumed her malicious: he did not perceive, or he would not allow, that we may be equally wrong, with very different degrees of

guilt; but, as if Lady Luxmore had sinned against every light of conscience and the most informed morals, he evinced the most decided aversion to her. Brooding over distorted images, he became gloomy: he shunned her company, and courted Gertrude's; and each now endeavoring to disgust her with the other, they bid for her attention and regard in different ways, but with emulation. He deplored his misfortune in being condemned to live with a woman, who, as he said, had no more power of appreciating him, than a fly of comprehending the circumference of St. Paul's cupola; and she, by such self-pity as 'Poor me! I am always in fault,'—strove to interest the justice, if not the affection, of her dependent.

A pair of twelve-inch globes, the best book on the use of them then published, with several presents connected with her pursuits, together with the often-repeated wish, that he could do any thing to oblige her, were the fruits of this change; and he became anxious to make friends for her: 'I have been,' said he, 'myself too fastidious: you ought, by this time, to have a few connexions with persons of your own time of life. Neither Lady Luxmore nor I can expect to live many years—and God knows!—I see not what is to become of you.'

Sentiments like these, wounded Gertrude, and she feared must be painful in the utterance: she therefore always met them cheerfully, and answered ingenuously, that, considering what had been done for her as inestimable, she doubted not
respect

respect for the care she had been under, would always procure for her such friends, as would be most valuable to her.

But the making connexions for her, was not to be attempted with any safety. The countess was, indeed, much improved in kindness; but engagements would have drawn Gertrude off. Except, therefore, in one instance, where Mr. Sterling insisted on introducing her to the daughter of an old friend, she had no visitor. Some attempts had been made to notice her, and she found on her return from airing, sometimes, a visiting-ticket, but Lady Luxmore always espied it, and before she could reach it, it was pocketed, or thrust between the bars of the stove-grate. Even when an arrangement had been made for her passing a few hours with her one friend, the countess contrived to be ill, or to give the coachman a holiday.

The winter, and her increasing infirmities, settled her ladyship by the fire-side; and Mr. Sterling, entirely regardless of her, made more frequent engagements than heretofore, and visited, *en garçon*, at many houses where he met persons of the first pretensions, to whom his knowledge, which was out of the common track, and his mode of communicating it, which was peculiarly benignant, rendered him very agreeable.

Unwilling to enjoy these pleasures alone, when he knew there was one to whom they would be equally advantageous and gratifying, he sometimes insisted on Gertrude's preparing to accompany him, and brought her the kindest invitations; but

she could not yield in this point. When he was not satisfied with her excuse, founded on the probable censure of the world, she said, 'Were I not dependent, were Lady Luxmore my mother, I should still decline leaving her—I could not be happy in doing it: the fear of her falling asleep near the fire, would distress me.'

'Why cannot her maid sit with her?'

'O! no sir; I cannot turn her, nor could I were she my mother, to the care of a servant, while I sought amusement. It has often astonished me when I have heard of young women leaving their mothers in this way. Is a servant company fit for a lady? or is there any pleasure in the world that can justify our quitting our duties? Besides, I really consider *myself*: there is a satisfaction to one's own feelings, in giving up for the sake of another; and I am sure it is easier to give up wholly, than partially. Sometimes Lady Luxmore will let me read to her, and then I am quite happy; and when I cannot do what I like, it makes me enjoy opportunities.'

'You will be cheated of the best years of your life, Gertrude.'

'It may be so, sir, in one sense; but I seem to chuse to be cheated; and I can never repent it, because I hope I mean what is right. Mine is no sudden whim. When I have heard good Mrs. Merit excuse her niece's unfeeling absence, and endeavor to shew how attentive she was in writing, and how pleasant her return would be made by her long visits to her friends, I never could be
satisfied

satisfied that she was right. Mrs. Merit always talked of the authority she was obliged to use to drive her out; but she could not have driven *me*. I claim no praise; I mean no censure:—I can only say, it is my peculiar feeling*.’

* We mean our facts, and their circumstances, for gentle admonition; and as the attention due to the aged and infirm, is a serious subject, we will strengthen our hint by the simple detail of a morning-call. We drove to the house of a good cheerful wealthy old lady, who was blessed with a son of uncommon filial piety. She had resided, unmolested and unmolested, with him during his marriage, and continued to do so, subsequent to the irreparable loss of his wife. After the lapse of several years, he had married again; and this new wife was in the high-day of a novel exaltation, when we made our visit. Being introduced to her, we waited the entrance of the old lady, but she not coming, we enquired for her—and were answered, ‘O! she does not sit with us—she keeps her room.’——‘Is she ill?’——‘O! no’——‘do, Emma, go and see if she likes to have company.’——A request to us to go to her, was brought, and we ascended to the second story, where, instead of seeing her, as we had been accustomed, in an elegant drawing-room, and with every thing becoming her situation in life, we found her sitting within four feet of her bed, by a dirty fire, and so surrounded by boxes and pieces of furniture, which she seemed anxious to secure, that there was little space to move in. She was drest as handsomely as ever, in deep mourning for a son by her first marriage!—We asked the cause of all this change,—Her answer was—‘I cannot bear their noise—day and night there is no peace—company all day long!—out all night!—O! it is too much for me. I shall be soon, I hope, in my coffin.’——The tears poured from her eyes as she spoke, and she afforded the sorrowful picture of grey hairs brought to an untimely grave.—Perhaps, had any body prophesied to her whose unfeeling folly occasioned this distress, that such would be her conduct, she might have answered in the words of Hazael.

In this plan of renunciation she persisted through the winter, and, excepting one opera, an irresistible temptation to curiosity, which she indulged when she had procured a lady to remain with the countess, she deviated not from it.

The heads of the family never agreed so well as in their state of indifference. Gertrude soothed and smoothed to the best of her abilities; but, as may be supposed in this state of politics, she was frequently charged with partiality to Mr. Sterling. Infirmities now came on him, for which his niece could offer no alleviations, and which obliged him to resort to her *protégée*; his eyes too failed him, and he was compelled to forego his recreation of music, except as he played by memory: he lost his relish for his pipe, and when he had atchieved the literary labor he had undertaken, he called it his last work.

As he could seldom now spare Gertrude in the forenoon, unless while he went on Wednesdays and Fridays to prayers at the nearest church, Lady Luxmore had less than heretofore of her company; and sensible of being alone, she felt her time pass heavily. ‘Could you not,’ said Gertrude, ‘find some amusing book for an hour?’—The hint was improved on; and at about fifty-six, Lady Luxmore sat down to a *regular* system of reading, regular as to its duration, if in no other point; for she laid out her watch when she began, and intending to read an hour, she left off when the minute-hand warned her, even if she was in the middle of a word.

The

The life of Gertrude Aubrey had now stolen on till she was in the twentieth year of her age. Two years had completed her acquisition of Italian, and in learning it, she had gained more idea than she had hitherto of the structure of Latin. In assisting Mr. Sterling, much more had devolved on her than merely transcribing: there were parts of his labor to which he thought her equal, and these he had turned over to her; and though he never commended any thing she wrote, farther than the hand-writing, yet his printing from her copy, was a proof that she had done what he expected from her; and this was all it was necessary she should know. A trifling circumstance, however, served to betray his good opinion. ‘You must alter this word, *futilely*,’ said he to her, one day, when revising what she had done; ‘B—— L—— says it is not right—it is at least objectionable—adjectives of this termination sound awkwardly with the adverbial addition.’——‘And pray, sir,’ said she, laughing, ‘how came B—— L—— to know it was my writing?’——‘Get along, hussey,’ he replied, with equal mirth of manner.

To indulge her in another branch of knowledge, he had asked for her the loan of an initiatory work in botany, with the author of which he was well acquainted; and Mrs. Anne Britton being this year in London, she had the pleasure and advantage of her conversation on the subject. ‘I would guard you,’ said she, ‘against those who may wish to impose on you, for received opinions, their

own

own unfounded ideas. Botany will never, as a science, rank very highly with scholars; but to the mind that takes pleasure in order, it must always give pleasure. Every combination must have its simple principles:—every art has its grammar, and without an acquaintance with the grammar of art, the art itself must be superficially understood: it is most incorrectly, that we call the ability to sound on an instrument the meaning of characters stamped on paper, the knowledge of music: it is an acquaintance with one branch of it; and as far from right are we, when we fancy ourselves botanists, because we know the names of the last new half-hundred of plants. But if there be, as there certainly is, a satisfaction in knowing the principles that form a science, it is a satisfaction easily purchased in the science of botany; and if the contemplation of the powers of a great, a comprehensive, and an accurate mind, can give us pleasure; if we delight in seeing powers that can expand and contract at will, few can be better worth our attention than that of Linnæus. I know nothing equal to his system of arrangement, unless it be the logic of Dean Aldrich: but were the lovers of the science indispensibly obliged to adopt his ideas and his terms, I know not that I should recommend it: he affords one of the few instances where translation is preferable to an original: he might have been as methodical, without risking the misapprehensions that have disgusted parents and deterred pupils; and he might have shewn how order may rise to sublimity without

out the aid of fancy. But far more reprehensible are those writers, who taking up his whimsical ideas where he left them, have exaggerated them by the charms of meretricious poetry. I cannot conceal my suspicions, or express my detestation of such teachers. The consequence has been the unjust degradation of a lovely science, because it is hastily decided, that it cannot be acquired without the admission of impure ideas—an error as little founded in truth, as if you were to forbear copying a bust, or a draped figure, because it required an attendance on the lectures at Surgeons' hall, or the other theatres of anatomy.—Believe me,' concluded Mrs. Britton, 'good order is the conscience of minor duties, and classification is the result of good order. Confusion never yet did any good, and its influence will render the best things worthless*.'

* This truth has been seldom more clearly verified than in the fate of that superb collection, the Leverian Museum. On its opening, it was gazed at, like the stock in trade of a great upholsterer; and the visitors walked through rooms of wonders, dazzled and overwhelmed: the novelty lasted but a short time. Sir Ashton found it would not do, and blamed the taste of the times: but he was wrong; he would not listen to the opinion of men of science, who saw nothing but wild disorder in this assemblage of 'all the birds of the air.' To save room, was his primary object; to shew brilliant colors in a favorable light, was his next solicitude; consequently, not an iota of erudition was to be derived from this princely congregation of what would have been inestimable, had it been in order; and the event has been that, exciting no interest but an uninformed curiosity, the collection was ruined, and is now scarcely recollected.

Gertrude

Gertrude was, at this period, though excluded from vivid pleasures, enjoying as much real happiness as she could attain without the alloy of intermingled care; and to this situation, and the gratitude it demanded, the circumstances under which she had been reared, made her reasonably sensible. She had never been flattered, though sometimes commended;—she had not been taught to suppose the world made for her; and neither rights nor expectations had been suggested to her by any whose opinion she felt inclined to trust. She still omitted nothing in her power that could increase her stock of knowledge, though she scarcely knew of what it would consist, or to what it would amount; and persuaded that, with all her efforts, she must yet be miserably deficient, when compared with the rest of the world, she was preserved from vanity and conceit. Aware of the facility with which she might exchange feminine habits, for those of Mr. Sterling's study; and considering such a change as renouncing inestimable privileges, and leading to much that is reprehensible, she made the attention to her person and to fashion, keep pace with her acquaintance with better subjects, and felt, perhaps, prouder, when Lady Luxmore's personal servant asked her instructions in the affairs of the toilette, than when Mr. Sterling turned over to her an incorrect paragraph, with his good-humored quotation, 'what you would have it, make it.' Lady Luxmore's frequent observation, that the older she grew, the more precise she was in her dress, could not deter her, though, it must be confessed,

confessed, it once provoked her to say, ‘ I am so, ma’am, because I think it right : every body who knows Mr. Sterling’s kindness to me, will give me credit for being able to read ; but they may suppose, that I think dressing well, beneath my attention ; and this would be an injurious idea.’ It would have answered no purpose, had she, on this hint, turned slattern : there were other equivalent taunts ready for other occasions. If she copied or translated any thing for herself, there was the question, ‘ Pray, Miss, when do you print and publish?’——a sort of ‘ even-handed justice’ in reproof, that, after all, left her in perfect liberty.

When not fully employed by Mr. Sterling, and with only casual occupation from Lady Luxmore, she had time to get some farther insight into natural philosophy, and to improve in drawing. He encouraged her in both, and giving her, now and then, *viva voce*, a lesson in perspective, close to a brick-wall, it answered purposes that extended her ideas ; and she never lost the instruction connected with it, or deducible from it.

Music was still out of her reach ; but she preserved a steady resolution to apply diligently to it at her first opportunity.——It was now, alas ! too late for Mr. Sterling to interest himself in her indulgence.

She had stood, for some years, the galling questions, ‘ Does Miss sing ? Does Miss play ? Does Miss draw ? Does Miss *tambour* ?’ and receiving them like an electrical shock, she rejoiced when they

they were over, and Lady Luxmore had, with a meaning peculiarly her own, answered, 'No—no;—Miss does nothing.'—All these interrogatories were favors, compared to, 'Is Miss *almost* married?' What could the fools who put it, suppose would be the answer? Did they imagine, *they* would be the first informed?

A fine spring this year succeeded a winter, in which Mr. Sterling suffered much from a languid circulation. Gertrude's cares had been comforts, which he willingly acknowledged; but her almost indispensable attention to him, did not recommend her to the countess, or conciliate the uncle and niece. In all the useful abilities Gertrude had tried to make her own, it had not been possible to include those of doing two things at a time, or being in two places at once; and if Mr. Sterling had set her about something that she could not leave, and wanted her to do something very trifling, he would say, 'Nancy, do you tie this, or pin that, for me;'—but rarely did this occur, without the correcting *finale*,—'Do let Gertrude do it; you are so awkward:—I will wait for Gertrude.'—The consequence may be prophesied—'Ah! I see I am nobody!—it's a fine thing to be a favorite!'—And then she had a gentle lecture on the arts by which she had risen into favor.

But all this was soon to end. In this temper towards each other, and when Lady Luxmore was confined to her chamber, by a slight indisposition, Mr. Sterling, one morning, made known his intention of going, as had been, of late years, his
occasional

occasional practice, to take the chalybeate water at Islington. He invited Gertrude to go with him ; but she excused herself by the impropriety of leaving the countess : he acquiesced good-humoredly, though reluctantly, and set out alone in the carriage. On his return, about an hour before dinner, he went to his study, and was not seen till he was called to dinner, when he entered the dining-parlor with his watch in his hand, which, on coming to the table, he dropt. Gertrude was terrified : she could not understand his appearance any farther than sufficed to guess, that he must feel very ill : he seemed confused, and at a loss, and, in attempting to say grace, his voice faltered. She observed to him, that he seemed unwell, to which he replied dejectedly, ‘ I think so too,’——and was led to his chamber, where, at the end of a week, he expired, leaving Gertrude no consolation but the remembrance of his kindness, and the inestimable satisfaction of hearing him say to his physician,—and they were the last words she heard from his lips,—‘ She is a good girl.’——O ! who can tell ?—who can *not* feel, the misery—the deprivation—the solitude—of the forlorn Gertrude Aubrey ?

Lady Luxmore had recovered from her cold, and had been ‘ herself ’ through the scene, or rather the rumor of the scene ; for she knew, only by report, what was passing. She had sent for a physician, because the apothecary required it : she had engaged a nurse, because the physician ordered it : she had not been unkind to Gertrude,
nay,

may, she had been *indulgent* ; for she gave her wine, and of the very best sort she possessed, to support her in her fatigue and anxiety. At the end of four days, there had been hopes of life and partial recovery ; and these she had accepted as if they dismissed all care. When, on the subsequent opinion of the medical attendants, she was informed, that all hope was vanished, Gertrude was discredited and reproached, as if indulging affected feelings ; and when the matter was incontestible, she was blamed, because she could not tell how much Lady Regle gave her servants for mourning.

But as whatever may be the eccentricities of the persons with whom we have to act, it is safest to act rightly ourselves ; Gertrude's *quadruped* notions, led her to treat the countess like a person of some common feeling. She therefore took on herself the task of informing her—and she did it with the utmost tenderness—that her uncle was no more.—We cannot give the tone of her, ‘ Well ! then the undertaker must be sent for.’—— She sent for her milliner with the undertaker, and then ordered the carriage for an airing, in which Gertrude was obliged to accompany her.

The relation of uncle and niece, is not so near as to criminate her ladyship's proceedings : it is seldom very interesting, where authority has been exerted and rejected ; and sorry are we to say, the knowing that, in spite of all provocation, another person will be just, often dispenses with the cultivation of affection. Lady Luxmore and

Mr. Sterling had never been fond ; and when they agreed best, it was rather a truce than an amnesty. Like ill-riveted scissars, they grated on each other, unless they had something to cut ; and, perhaps, Gertrude, by furnishing this requisite, had contributed to keep them together. When they had lived long enough with each other, to love from mere habit, they began to do something very much like the contrary, from intimacy and weariness ; consequently, they parted without pain*. The apothecary civilly enjoined her ladyship to think only of her own health, and the undertaker as civilly informed her, that, merely for an uncle, nobody now shut themselves up ; and when Mr. Sterling was buried, and a few of his friends had left their tickets, his memory seemed committed to Gertrude.

Without some purpose of usefulness, the portraiture of character, unless it can always be favorable, becomes, in spirit, libel ; and seriously must we render an account of any pleasure taken in unveiling the faults of our fellow-creatures. But without any breach of charity, we may avail ourselves of experience ; and presuming that mankind when they have shaken off the infirmities of the flesh, would rejoice in holding out a lesson to after ages, we may draw a moral from our tale. Let it

* We cannot omit here, the *dictum* of an invaluable friend of ours : ‘ It is impossible to live many years with any one, without discovering their good qualities.’ What an improvement in domestic happiness would follow from cultivating this, rather than the opposite sentiment !

be remembered, that, in the two persons now separated by death, there was no remarkable vice, no egregious folly. In Lady Luxmore there was nothing to despise, but a peevish, morose, wayward temper, partly inherited, partly taught, never corrected or opposed : had she been, in her childhood, carried out into the fields ; had she been shewn the sky, the sun, the moon and stars, as the work of a beneficent hand ; had she been made to contemplate an expanse of water, or the progress of vegetation, her mind would have dilated ; and, impressed with the connected ideas of omnipotence and goodness, she might have been led from admiration to gratitude and sympathy : but nursed in sordidness, educated in darkness, and doomed to live in sounds of wealth, nothing but a taste could have dragged her out of the abyss of inanity, to which she was consigned ; and her intellect became more and more stagnant, as it was more and more fortified against the vicissitudes of life.

In her uncle, she might indeed have found an object to call out and employ the useful and the laudable powers of a female. The large grasp of the masculine mind, cannot bend to embrace trifles :—trifles are prepared by lower faculties, and chiefly by the female part of society. The family of a learned man, should be, not his care, but his relaxation ; and their attentions should serve to polish down whatever little roughnesses are acquired in the study. All, indeed, may not be so happy in the object of their filial attention as the amiable Mademoiselle De L.—Few are the fathers,

thers who, like hers, retain perfect intellect and a benign temper, at almost four-score and ten!—few, very few, has the Almighty blest with equal powers, and the power of using them to the best purposes. It is the privilege of few to stand forward the bulwark of Christianity against the torrent of authorised infidelity, and then to shew how the mind can recoil to its simplest mode of existence : to write, without ostentation, for the delight of the wise and the information of the ignorant, and, with equal dignity, to relax the tension of faculties in the fabulous haunts of childhood.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Portrait of a preceptor.

WHAT Gertrude had gained from almost the involuntary friendship of Mr. Sterling, she valued ; but it was not till many years after this time, that she learnt its full worth : the fear of singularity, would, even now, have induced her to barter any part of her knowledge for what she supposed the accomplishments of other young women : she could not, at her age, foresee, that she had acquired, while serving him, the most perfect independence ; —that her correct curiosity would render the world and its novelties, at the same time, pleasant and safe ; that she would be willing to accept and to resign all that it had to offer ; —that, with equal feelings of gratification, she would welcome the vicissitudes of society and solitude ; —and that, happy in herself, she would be intrusted with the inestimable power of making others happy ; —that while many were encountering toil, fatigue, and danger, in the pursuit of pleasures which escaped their grasp, she, at home and without effort, would find the substance of their shadows ; that her singularities would be accepted as recommendations ; —and that it would, from her example, be questioned whether a plan of unhackneyed usefulness, somewhat

somewhat above that ascribed to girls, and the necessary attainments of an industrious home, might not, with less severe discipline indeed, form the best education for women.

Under the guidance of such a tutor, though there might be deficiencies, there could be but little error. Certainly, the individual ultimately benefited, was not the primary care of his thoughts: her advantage was the *result of*, not the *motive to*, his exertions: but his natural justice, and his inclination, made him afterwards an assistant, where he had been only a commander; and when she had served him, he served her. No man better understood how to lay a foundation for character; and the edifice he raised on it, though it might not be modern, would infallibly be substantial. In externals, where the love of old habits did not prevail, he could be wrong only when they deviated from right: he hailed, as the triumph of his own system, the adoption of a simple mode of female dress; and, in his latter years, interesting himself in her personal appearance, he would often encourage her to the attentions of the toilette, by a reprobation of negligence, by remarking on female neatness, as contributing to the cheerfulness of society, and by a decided opinion, that every woman was entitled to make every fair advantage of the gifts of nature. Notwithstanding his seeming austerity, which, if described and not actually witnessed, might have led to a contrary supposition, he was no severe censurer of fashion, or even of that excess of it which amounts to folly:

he looked on it with the eye of Addison, and thought it too fleeting to abide more than a smile. Even the artificial complexion never met from him a more poignant reproach than the observation, that painted cheeks are a sign of an empty head, and not consistent with English integrity. But respecting this, he drew a line, which it is suicide to pass: the adoption of deleterious beauty, he beheld with abhorrence and with loathing, and the wish to impose with contempt. He was, in all points, an advocate for liberal expence, though considering himself as living too much out of the world to be influenced by his own opinions; and disliking finery, he gave great praise to what he termed, in our dress or our dwellings, 'handsome.'

Expertness in manual operations, was a great recommendation to his favor; and to do worse at one time than another, was a failure for which he accepted no apology. 'Have you not always the same number of fingers and thumbs?' was his reproving question. To carry a tottering pile of books, or a vessel filled with liquid to the brim, were commands that had their use; and his not permitting Gertrude to sit or walk negligently, contributed, more than the dancing-master's instructions, to the decency of her deportment.

Writing, in all its modifications, both as to phrase and character, was indispensibly necessary in one who was to serve him; and he spurred his handmaid's pride, by reminding her of queen Elizabeth's excellence in it. He knew the human heart too well to accept with modern docility, the persuasion

persuasion that it is to be seen the most unveiled in the effusions of the pen, when employed in correspondence: he admitted it was seen to the *fairest advantage*, for who is odious on paper? Letters of friendship and kindness, he acknowledged, shew what the affections can *say*: letters of business, he asserted, shewed more unequivocally what the intellect can *do*: and in speaking of the royal prototype, he referred, for proofs of her extraordinary endowments, to those letters, some of which, the clandestine disobedience of the persons to whom they were written, preserved for posterity,—‘The glory of her *deeds*,’ said he, ‘others might share; and we might be defied to prove her portion in suggesting measures, or carrying them into effect; but of the spontaneous dictation of her own sagacity and experience, there can be no doubt, when we see it committed, by her own hand, to paper, and in confidence to a minister*.

A mind

* One of these proofs exists in the Sidney papers, in a letter from her to Sir Henry Sidney, then Lord-Deputy of Ireland, which the concluding injunctions, ‘Let this memorial be only committed to Vulcan’s base keeping’—and, ‘Seem not to have had but secretaries’ letters from me’—shew to have been of profound secrecy. Some of her sentiments evince the most perfect address in business, as well as the most finished prudence. She says, ‘Make some difference between tried, just, and false friends.—‘Let the good service of well-deservers be never rewarded with loss: let their thanks be such as may encourage more strivers for the like.’—‘A strength to harm is perilous in the hands of an ambitious head.’—‘If I had not espied legerdemain, I had never played my part; if I did not see the balance held awry, I had
never

A mind cast in a smaller mould than Mr. Sterling's, would, in rearing a girl to his service, have used very different means: but in cultivating her powers, he sowed wheat, not cresses; and he waited patiently the ripening of a slow harvest: had she been educated in a common way, the giving her a good epistolary style, or, as it is very vulgarly termed, the making her 'write a good letter,' might not only have been an injunction; but practice must have been used to accomplish it. So far was he from urging this necessity, that, as we have before hinted, there was no employment for the leisure of women he more despised, than what he called, 'the chambermaid's accomplishment of scribbling.' Certainly, a facility in doing ill, can never be desirable; and that eloquence of tongue or pen, which ranks the possessor with the descendants of Mrs. Slipslop, is not the attribute of a gentlewoman. From this sisterhood, let no one boast herself an alien, because she is of good birth, or can spell correctly. The 'slipslop' is of all ranks of life, and not necessarily illiterate. We are happy in saying we feel much at a loss to give examples of it: our own friends are very niggardly in this point. We must borrow from our betters, and be beholden for an instance of epistolary bathos in the slipslop dialect to a lady, almost of the highest rank.

never myself come into the warehouse.' 'If aught have been amiss at home, I will patch, though I cannot whole it.'—'Let us not consult so long as till advice come too late to the givers: a fool too late bewares, when all the peril is past.'

'You

‘ You do me but justice to believe that it was impossible for me to imagine that my not hearing from you, in this my most heavy affliction, was owing to your want of friendship. No, dear sir, I was, on the other hand, convinced you shared in a great measure with me. You knew my much loved sister and though you only knew her when a child, yet even in that time she was amiable. Think then, when these dawning virtues were ripened to perfection, what my loss must be: she was at once my pride and pleasure; and it had pleased God to adorn her with every external and inward accomplishment that could render her dear to her poor distressed family. What addition of fortune can make me amends for the loss of so affectionate a sister, so estimable a friend? But I am to blame to dwell so long upon a subject which, I am sure, your good nature and your friendship for all our unhappy family, must make so affecting to you; but indeed ’tis the only one I am capable of either writing or thinking of. I shall therefore only add papa and mama’s and my lord’s compliments to you, and assure you I am, with an inviolable fidelity,’ &c. &c. &c.

Most sincerely do we wish we could repay our readers patience, with the perusal of one of the most elegant billets that ever came under our notice, written by General Wolfe, to recommend an officer for promotion. Not having it in our possession, we must endeavor to propitiate those of our own sex, by saying, on the information of mercantile gentlemen, that the best foreign letters they receive,

ceive, are from females. But however meritorious this excellence, we so far agree with Mr. Sterling as to think, that few things have a worse tendency than the uncontrolled correspondence of very young girls: boys certainly have no similar propensity: few men ever write a letter willingly; and in boys, there is a sort of *cui bono?* which, however they may waste their *time*, prevents what they think a waste of *labor*; but girls, if left to themselves, as they have, in general, an exuberant imagination, will scribble quires of paper: they begin with silly impertinencies about papa and mama, they proceed to foggy descriptions of places or things they have seen, all related in language as unnatural to their feelings, as the pitch in which they are taught to read, is to their voices: then follow details of balls and *fêtes*, where the persons, dresses, and manners of the performers and spectators, pass in review, and lead naturally to the subjects of love and lovers, marriage and married, topics consentaneous to the age of seventeen, elegant and virtuous in a good use of them, but vulgar and vicious when thus pursued. The replies to these pithy epistles seldom tend to correct their mischief; and any romantic idle unfounded passion, may be blown into flame by this substitute for breath. Were we to write a sermon once a week, sentiments of religion and goodness must be impressed on our minds by the exercise; and in the same way and proportion, must recorded nonsense affect those who record it.

Another strong objection to early correspondence, subsists in the pouring out from a poor stock
of

of ideas: there is little thought where there is great loquacity; and the time spent by a novice in writing a letter, would be better employed in the collection of materials. Mr. Sterling's employment of Gertrude, in transcribing what he wrote, gave her every advantage without any subtraction*.

It cannot be supposed that he, *on every point*, adopted the sentiments of the school of Chesterfield: he could not think with more contempt of a mischievous monkey, than of its founder; but the style of his letters, and the tendency and argument of those which were designed as spurs to a slow mind and heavy faculties, he always commended.

An education of no common success has heretofore been accomplished, merely on negative principles; and on such principles, with the addition of good examples, did Mr. Sterling form Gertrude's style of writing, or, as fashion would call it, 'composition;' but composition it could hardly

* Utterly irrelevant to what we have been saying, brought in by head, neck, and shoulders, but too humorous to be lost, we give a proof of the inaccuracy that even Mr. Sterling could fall into, and which his candor made him very willing to bring forward. He was so often right, that he could afford to be wrong;—and if he had lost by divulging his mistake, he must have gained by the ingenuousness of the confession. He had occasion to write to two persons at the same time; the one a solicitor, the other a catcher of rats. When we have said this, it will be supposed he mis-directed his letters. No such thing: he only misplaced the *professions*: the vermin-hunter took the affront passively; but the solicitor requested in his reply, to know why he was styled rat-catcher.

be termed in her case: whatever she did, poor girl! bore the same relation to rule that language originally bore to grammar: it was not formed by it, but it rarely sinned against it. She could truly say with Cowper, ‘ Though the art of writing and composing was never much my study, I did not find that Blair and Beattie had any great news to tell.’

What would be a style formed entirely on rules of composition, it would hardly be possible to imagine in our language; but it is to be apprehended, that the effect would be somewhat similar to the stiffness produced by the preservation of the unities in an English drama. Certainly, that style which Gertrude derived from Mr. Sterling, pretended to no superior excellence, as he gave her no rules to observe, but the using integral parts of speech, instead of ready-made phrases, and the reaching the end of making herself understood with the least trouble to those whom she addressed*.—Regarding the distinction of sex, even in this department of the mind, he admitted in what she did for him, no antithetical imitation, no studied terseness, none of the ‘ ore rotundo,’ while, on the other hand, he equally hunted down

* What would he have said to the seemingly studious use made of phrases in a letter lately given to the public, in which the noble writer professes himself *free to say* of an ally, that our cabinet must, he supposes, *bolster them up!*—or to an admiral who tells us, that he cannot *desist* from forwarding an account of an action, which *resulted* in an important capture?

all affected cadences, all, what he called, 'writing to a tune,' and every departure from simplicity. He had met his own ideas of excellence in the prose of Lord Bacon, Hooker, Barrow, Sir Thomas Browne, Osborne, Clarendon, Bentley, Clarke, Warburton, Johnson, and the other writers of that nervous school; and possessing too analysing, too discriminating a taste, to admire without exception, he selected from their works, and made her almost get by heart, passages, whose peculiar emphasis and beauty rendered them his favorites.

To her he recommended, as characterised by mildness, sweetness, elegance, and simplicity, the style of the author of 'the Whole Duty of Man,' of Hawkesworth, of Sir William Temple, with an exception of his Gallicisms, and even of honest Izaak Walton, whose 'Lives,' as well as the spirit of the dialogue in his piscatory work, he admired with affection*.

We have undertaken a task beyond what we

* Permit us here to record the tears we have seen in the eyes of Johnson, when repeating the concluding sentence of Walton's life of Sanderson. To save the reader's rising from his chair, we give it; wishing we could convey the tremulous plaintive tone in which we heard it uttered: 'Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence, changed this for a better life: 'tis now too late to wish that mine may be like his; for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age, and God knows, it hath not been; but I most humbly beseech Almighty God, that my death may; and I do as earnestly beg, that if any reader shall receive any satisfaction from this very plain and as true relation, he will be so charitable as to say, *Amen.*'

foresaw, in endeavoring to give the detail of a mind, whose horizon was not bounded, even by its knowledge; for we have to plead the testimony of a learned and venerable prelate;—may he live to read this! who, perfectly qualified by his own acquirements, to make the appreciation, said of this mind, that whatever it did not possess, it knew better than any other man's where to seek; and when we add to this sagacity, the most scrupulous, the most delicate adherence to truth, and the ability to describe most manual operations, both in technical and colloquial terms, so as that the eye seemed the organ of information, we attribute no common abilities to the instructor of Gertrude. Years after his lessons had ceased, when she saw the process of printing, weaving, and various other species of manufacture, she was not aware that she had not, till then, seen it.

As connected with the subject of style, we will go on to speak of those English authors who, as possessing or not possessing his good opinion, were used in different ways as parts of Gertrude's discipline. To the wit of Addison, no critic was ever more sensible: a thorough acquaintance with the history of the opera, a degree of intimacy with Handel, which had sometimes made him, though then a lad, the first auditor of compositions since known to all; and a humorous acceptance of the *shifts* of a theatre, gave him particular interest in the satire bestowed on the exotic performance of a vehicular drama, while the inimitable gravity of Addison, rendered this and all his other ludicrous subjects

subjects, to his apprehension, irresistibly comic; but to his didactic style, and to the arrangement of his sentences, he objected a want of vigor and of method, which defects, long after his opinions were formed, were made the basis of public exhortation to an improved mode of diction. To Swift, so often quoted as a model, he gave just, but qualified praise: he saw no more merit in his rejection of all foreign embellishment, than he would have done in a professed dereliction of the aid claimed by the arts from Italy. The caricature of this excessive purity, exhibited in a work on 'the bulk and selvidge of the world,' containing amongst other English predilections, the word, 'thoroughfaresomeness,' instead of penetrability, often connected itself with the remembrance of Swift; but of the works jointly the production of him and Arbuthnot, he thought very highly, as of genuine humor. The 'Tale of a Tub,' 'John Bull,' the 'Tritical Essay,' the 'Wonder of Wonders,' the law-case respecting the black and white horses, and many other tracts in the miscellanies which go under the names of Swift and Pope, would, at any time, excite his merriment and call forth his admiration; but on no line of the writings of these wits, or of any others, which offended against decorum, was he ever tolerant. To keep out error, and to preserve a mind free from degrading images, he seemed to consider as equivalent with the implanting truth and virtue.

As

As a trumpery taste in Gertrude would have been very inconvenient, he had prohibited her reading trash ; and to bribe her to obedience, he had promised, if she would forbear, to give her a better inclination : it was no sacrifice to her to renounce what she had been taught, from her earliest years, to despise ; she therefore gave her free promise, not to read what she could think he would disapprove ; and though she could never perceive any *effort* made to give her this superior taste, it came, somehow, in the nature of things ; and she was satisfied. Some little time before he died, he had said to her, ‘ I can perceive your perfect adherence to your promise ; it has been so perfect, that you are now deficient in an acquaintance with the popular authors of your own country ; and you may, and you must, when you have opportunity, know what is contained in the writings of Fielding and Smollett.’ The knowledge was easily attained ; and at the time when it was sought, there was not the smallest danger of her fancying Tom Jones a model for a lover, or all the wisdom of the wise contained in the wit, however brilliant, of men who studied rather the town than the world. She had heard the characters of the authors before she became acquainted with those in their pages ; and she could neither adopt nor approve their recommendations and substitutions, however she might admire their talents.

With ‘ Don Quixote’ she had, early in her rummages, become intimate ; but as it was through
the

the medium of that called Jarvis's translation, and that in the quarto edition, superbly decorated with engravings from no plebeian designs, the ideas with which it impressed her mind, and which Mr. Sterling confirmed, were rather those of what may be called 'grand comedy,' than low farce. The Don was always a gentleman; the squire was never a buffoon or a mountebank; the humor was grave, and its gravity made it more humorous; and in the much that gave lessons of wisdom and of goodness, she found those judicious resting-places for sober thought, which, independent of their own excellence, increased, by contrast, that of the other parts. Thus introduced to Cervantes, it was, years after, but a half-step to the original, when she had attained a knowledge of the language: the same countenance served for the stage of Madrid and of London: she had not to alter her pre-conceived ideas of the personages; and when she accidentally discovered the *travestie*, into which other translators had rendered him, she felt glad that she had known no other than the gentlemanly, the very faithful, and the spirit-transfusing work, to which the name of Jarvis is affixed.

It cannot correctly be said, that Mr. Sterling's enthusiastic admiration of Don Quixote, included Hudibras; but, on the same ground, he certainly admired both. Accustomed to quote it, as is all the world, he yet waited patiently for the possibility of her entering fully into the spirit of a work depending for fair estimation on an extensive, yet
minute

minute knowledge of obsolete party and its jargon. He contented himself with fixing in her mind, by his own repetitions, short passages of peculiar beauty, and many of which carried with them a valuable precept.

As it is not our intention to enter on the subject of political opinion, it will answer every purpose in our view, if we here say, that one of the first of those passages, which he hung upon her memory, was that which describes what he thought an added grace in women, a sincere, respectful, and unvarying gratitude to that government, and that form of it, which protects us; and as it was her good fortune to be born in the reign of a monarch whom, if goodness can be amiable, common sense must teach us to love and to respect; sentiments of loyalty were, from her first perception of her own ideas, congenial to her heart. It might have cost Mr. Sterling a few minutes' labor to teach her, in the case of a vicious monarch, the distinction between respect for the office and for the person: but he would have succeeded by enforcing Sir Thomas Wyndham's advice to his sons: 'Cleave to the crown, though it hang on a bush.' If a case could have occurred, where it was necessary to remind her of what he had said, he would have asked her, with a cutting contempt, how far asunder were the precepts, 'Fear God; honor the king;' and if she could have fretted at services unrequited, the passage we allude to in *Hudibras*, would have answered every purpose:

For

* For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game ;
True as the dial to the sun;
Altho' it be not shone upon *.'

The subjugation under which she had been reared, tending rather to liberate than to fetter her opinions; she might, with the prudence of being silent, have adopted any of the absurdities which the countess's warped temper made her praise as hostile to the established order of things; and the notions of the viscount might have assisted in destroying first principles; but when she resorted to Mr. Sterling for an explanation of the names given to various modes of government, he had amplified on the subject, and concluded with saying, ' If there are two descriptions of persons better entitled to the benefits of Bethlem hospital than others, they are heads of families who promote faction, and teachers of schools with democratic inclinations. A republic is a fine thing in poetry; but it will not do in a large commercial island like our's.'

The most scouting ridicule would have met any presumption on the part of Gertrude to ' ape the politician;' and his method would have been to overwhelm her with a torrent of diplomatic jargon; but to informing her on any point of history, he

* Is the reader informed that one of the best translations existing, is of this extraordinary poem into French verse, and by an Englishman? If he can ever get a sight of Colonel Townley's work, printed in London, 1757, it will, if he be an admirer of the poem, surprise him.

had no objection; and even on legal points connected with it, he would take pains to speak at some length, ending his sentences, as he proceeded, with, 'Do I make myself clear?' 'Do you completely understand me?' The fruit of this trouble was the firmest fortification against paltry captiousness and ignorant sophistry. He let her see the wide difference between the meaning now affixed to terms, and that originally conveyed; and hence he warned her against being carried away by opinion that has lost sight of its origin. The water at the source and at the mouth of a river, may be very different; but what can he discover of its properties, who analyses it within reach of a salt spring-tide.

In aid of his information derived from history, had come the acumen and philosophic applications of her Roman tutor. When reading Davila, he had often stopt her to repeat the remark, that the affairs of a people may be traced in those of a house, and that, *vice versâ*, by amplification, our personal concerns may become the interests of mankind. He had warned her not to consider the time bestowed in reading a history of strifes in a foreign country, as merely an exercise on the language, or even the bare attainment of a knowledge of facts. 'You will find,' said he, 'the pains you have bestowed on these volumes, useful to you through life: the characters of those qualities which are understood by experience, must be written on the young mind in a large hand, that they may be correctly read;—they may be transcribed for use
into

into a smaller at any time ; and be assured, that often, when you are obliged to consider before you act, the errors of these persons will serve you for a guide ; you will recollect the evils to which a want of temper has led, and the public crimes produced by private motives : you will see how necessary it is to know precisely what is right, and to keep that honestly in view : you will perceive the folly of endeavoring to please persons of opposite interests ; and believe me, if you ever have a family of servants to govern, you will govern them the better for having read Davila with me.'

Recollecting as far as we are able, and in obedience to a request for the detail, what were the books that Mr. Sterling threw in Gertrude's way, we must add to those we have enumerated. But in doing this, let it be understood, that the manner in which she was made to use them, is to be considered. Of some, she was ordered to read parts, and was told that the rest was not worth her trouble. Such was the control of his opinion, that, on what he told her was not worth her trouble, she never bestowed it, even when from under his eye : she read the most instructive of Erasmus's ' Colloquies' under this control, and even parts of Shaftesbury's writings. Selden's ' Table-talk,' Hume's ' Essays,' were works that called for a little verbal preface when given to her. Watts's Logic she was compelled to begin by way of punishment and corrective of a shuffling method of excusing herself, consequent on nervous terror ; but she

soon regarded it as a favor, rather than an infiction.

When she had finished Lord Clarendon's history, which we should have said was preceded by Baker's 'Chronicle,' he gave her two volumes which delighted her: The 'Memoirs of a Cavalier,' which though now announced as to be included in the works of De Foe, he ascribed to Andrew Newport, and the authentic recollections of Dr. Welwood: Burnet's 'Own Time,' Howel's 'Letters,' and the 'Nugæ Antiquæ,' followed these, and closed, as far as we can recollect, her historical acquirements under him*.

Slender would have been her knowledge, had her *reading* bounded it; but the living commentary of Mr. Sterling's conversation, contained far more than the text of any author; and the reasons with which he condescended to enforce his opinions, made them her's without destroying that liberty which is opposed to hereditary prepossession.

Milton's 'Minor Poems,' Collins's 'Odes,' some of Dryden's 'Fables,' his 'great Ode,' the 'Iliad and Odyssey,' the 'Rape of the Lock,' some of

* To the last-named, indeed, of these works, she owed acknowledgments of a still higher kind. We may excite a smile when we refer part of her character to an imitation of Prince Henry, son to James I.; but it is fact, that from the memoirs of him, in Dr. Harington's publication, she borrowed that method of self-government, which his royal highness devised for himself; and had there been any one near her, candid enough to own, or at leisure to see, that she was *less bad* one year than in that preceding, the cause might have been traced to this source.

Waller's and Cowley's Poems*; Prior's 'Odes on the deaths of Queen Mary and Colonel Villiers,' his 'Paraphrase of St. Paul's definition of charity,' his 'Henry and Emma,' and all his innocent effusions of wit and mirth, he recommended; and many of them she had by heart. On giving her Thomson's 'Seasons,' he warned her that they represented things as they should be, rather than as they are: his 'Castle of Indolence,' he wished her to admire, as he did Shenstone's 'Schoolmistress;' but for the other works of the last-named poet, it was not consistent with the manly character of his mind, to entertain much respect.

Of plays, divided into tragedy and comedy, those of Shakespeare, and the 'Three plays' of Ben Jonson, stood highest in his estimation. He was attached to many of the comedies of the old school; but as Gertrude heard of these only by chance, she supposed them involved in the censure due to licentious writing. One circumstance connected with the stage, of which he was critically fond, had subjected him to the effect of prejudice. Early in life he had had the run of one of the theatres; and having seen Julius Cæsar thirteen nights in succession! the very mention of a Roman play would irritate him.

* He was a genuine admirer of the prose of Cowley, particularly of his 'Discourses by way of Essay;' and to the eloquence of Waller's speeches he did justice, notwithstanding his contempt for his character.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The portrait finished.

WE have purposely referred to the last class of literature that it occurs to us to mention, books on the most important subjects. Mr. Sterling's advice to Gertrude on that of religion, had been, as far as it went, unanimous with that of Mr. Sydenham. To fear God and to keep his commandments;—to believe in the divine character and mission of his Son, and to rely on his atonement; to honor the king, and to do strict justice—as it had been his practice, became his precept. The books therefore which he put into her hands, were such as are called orthodox. His advice, with regard to the Scriptures, was conveyed in an exhortation to keep up a constant acquaintance with them; and his own practice of reading them daily, would have overcome a disinclination; but in Gertrude there was none. We have traced and described her early predilection for them. He read, but he did not advise her to read, the commentaries of Patrick, Lowth, and Whitby, with Mac Knight's 'Harmony of the Evangelists:' he gave her Law's 'Serious Call;' and advised her, at some future period, to read Butler's 'Analogy;' but in stating his opinions, candor makes it necessary to add,
how

how far his approbation went. Of the latter work, he thought very highly : he considered it as the atchievement of a mind capable of the deepest thought and the most sublime speculation ; and he certainly did not expect that it would become a present for girls at school, not reared under any particular influence of serious thought, or possessing supernatural acumen of intellect. He would have been surprised at the rapid growth of the present age, could he have heard our lovely Leucothoë profess, that ‘ she had gone entirely through it, and found no difficulty in comprehending it : ’ he would have shaken his head ; nor would he have given much more credit to some of her seniors.—‘ I like no reading but metaphysics,’ said a young woman to him :—he smiled ; for a woman must have been very disagreeable, to have drawn out more than this rebuke from him, in conversation.

Of Law’s work, his judgment was very different, and certainly not such as raised it in her estimation, though she did not reject its counsels. The character and temper of the writer, which he knew well, did not recommend it ; and the fanatical appendages to his romantic portraits, sometimes met his apprehension in a ludicrous point of view. It was not, indeed, to be expected, that a mind, which, however lowly and contrite the heart connected with it, stood yet on a high ground of virtue—a mind that fed itself from the rich resources of the first Christian moralists, could, with complacency, enter into the groveling solitudes
of

of a weak, peevish ascetic. He who read, with glowing adoption, those manly, or may we not say, divine aphorisms, of Browne, which we select here by chance,—‘ Rest not in an ovation, but a triumph over thy passions. Let anger walk hanging down the head ; let malice go manacled, and envy fettered after thee. Behold within thee, the long train of thy trophies, not without thee. Make the quarrelling Lapithytes sleep, and Centaurs within thee lie quiet. Chain up the unruly legion of thy breast. Lead thine own captivity captive, and be Cæsar within thyself,’—was not of a temperament calculated for so low a latitude as that in which William Law wrote his chapter—we quote on this side the question, as equity demands, by a random opening of the book——‘ How the imprudent use of an estate corrupts all the tempers of the mind, and fills the heart with poor and ridiculous passions :’ nor could he see life and nature in the portrait of poor Mundanus, who is said, ‘ when he sees a book of devotion, to pass it by as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago, under his mother, when he learned to spell.’

It was not the common vulgar fear of being righteous over-much, that made Mr. Sterling depreciate the ‘ Serious Call :’ he well knew there was little danger, in the fallen state of human nature, and above all, in the present age of the world, of an excess of righteousness ; but he very much discouraged all attempts *at appearing* righteous over-much ; and it is to be apprehended, that

that, had Gertrude been disposed to submit her judgment to the guidance of Mr. William Law, and to emulate his now *impossible* Miranda, he would have warned her against affectation. Mr. Sterling was certainly no very profound arithmetician ; but he would have bestowed a few inches of paper, and brightened up his recollection of the use of figures, to have proved to her, that, at no time since these aunts of the sceptic historian lived, would it have been practicable for Miranda, with an income of two hundred pounds a year, to have *set up again in business, twenty bankrupts*,—in as many years to have *educated and put in a way of employment, many poor children* ; to have *allowed every sick laborer within her reach, twice the value of his wages* ; to have *paid the rent, and contributed to the clothing of many poor families* ; to have *made good all losses of cows or horses, or by little robberies in her neighborhood* ; to have *allowed, even a small number of old people more than the wages they earned when young* ; and to have *relieved all casual beggars* ; but if we are not mistaken, for we have not time to ascertain it,—this is not all ;—our memories have confounded themselves with our imaginations, if she does not *maintain a young man at the university, to enable him to enter on the service of the church*.—Surely the sample was the gross quantity.

But however we may under-rate the labors of William Law ;—however we may be persuaded that running away from the world is not going
through

through it, and that a noble mind, with regard to our fellow-men, is not inconsistent with an humble heart towards our Maker; God forbid that we should, for a moment, appear to depreciate the sublime precepts in which the poor man meant to found his little dramas and dramatic characters. Better, ten thousand thousand times, write like Law, than like him in whose family he practised his peevishnesses; and that there may be two opinions concerning his work, and that we may not be infallible in our's, we readily confess, while, prompted by a taste for justice, we transcribe a few lines of eulogium, which we find in our copy of the book, and which we suspect to be of no less authority than that of the late reverend Dr. Chapman, archdeacon of Sudbury.

‘This excellent treatise is written in a strong and nervous style, and abounds with many new and sublime thoughts. It has in it whatever wit and wisdom can put together; and we may venture to add, that whoever sits down without prejudice, and attentively reads it throughout, will rise up the wiser man and the better Christian.’

When Mr. Sterling was, we will not say, *educating his élève*, but *instructing his apprentice*, it did not occur to him, as necessary, to qualify her for any sort of disputation, much less for that species of it connected with her faith, her peace of mind, and her everlasting hopes. We did not at that time *talk* so much of religion as we do now. None had laid down their loo-cards to decide what species of faith comes short of, or constitutes

constitutes methodism or socinianism, when he formed his opinions. Good people went to church on Sundays, and, if living at leisure, on litany-days and red-letter days : they kept their children in obedience, and their servants in order ; they lived within their income, on principles of reason, discretion, and duty : they conceived all interference with their neighbors' modes of faith, unbecoming ; and forbearing equally from disturbing and from traducing them, they were not driven to draw upon the exchequer of religion, to avert the discredit of the moral department.

But notwithstanding this seeming deficiency, her creed was as safe as that of any disputant : she was not in the habit of risking any thing she valued, against that which she wished not to possess ; and she had common-sense enough to know, that whatever a female fights for, she stands a fair chance to lose. To be select in all her associations, was advice worth a volume of polemics, as *she* could have used it ; and to continue stedfast in a faith she had first received at her baptism, and then adopted at her confirmation, was an injunction no more difficult to comply with, than the preservation of her innocence or her reputation : she needed no arguments to defend either ; for she wore them in her heart : and when afterwards assailed by light reasoners with something like ridicule for her aversion to reading that which might create doubt, she could defend herself under the shelter of the great Mrs. Carter's example.

The

The writings of Jeremy Taylor and Archbishop Synge, 'The great Importance of a religious Life' the 'Religio Medici,' the pretty little volume, entitled 'The Religion of a Gentleman,' the inestimable 'Prayers of Bishop Andrews,' Ray's 'Wisdom of God,' Derham's 'Physico-Theology,' and many other works, for which the world has found substitutes, employed her Sundays, till her increased knowledge of languages, and a maturer mind, led her to a wider circuit. Mr. Sterling's principles of toleration, gave him advantages which a narrow prejudice renounces: he read Parsons's 'Christian Directory,' Bellarmine's 'Art of Dying,' and Lardner's 'Credibility of the Gospel,' and saw the merit and the use of all of them: he had lived much, in the early part of his life, with those respectable dissenters, who, equally removed from affected puritanism, and from the equivocations of a lax faith, accepted thankfully, and without abuse, the quiet guaranteed to them by a mild government.

His habits of piety had increased with his age; and they had led him, by degrees, to choral service, and to a regular attendance on the less decorated style of parochial worship, where perhaps his presence was necessary to make the congregation; but all this was the effect of choice, and was accompanied with no profession of peculiar strictness.

It was one of Lady Luxmore's plans of government, if we may be allowed the expression, to
inoculate

inoculate her dependent with faults, and then exhibit them as the disease of her nature. To the incessantly repeated allegation of a disposition to falshood, which, poor woman ! she could not separate, in her ideas, from a love of the marvellous, which she had herself implanted, and from terror, which she inspired ;—of insolence, which consisted in the feeling of a human creature under oppression never resisted and seldom declared ;—and of conceit or self-sufficiency, which had no foundation but in the impossibility of being ignorant,—was added the charge of idleness, and an endeavor to make it appear just. Mr. Sterling, knowing the value of precept inforced by example, would often enliven his reprehensions by the result of his experience ; and amongst others, gave her a fact which could not fail of impressing her mind : ‘ When I was a school-boy,’ said he, ‘ there were, nearly of the same age as myself, two boys, one of whom was an example of industry, the other of idleness. The master under whom we all were, took infinite pains with both ; and using, as occasion required, commendation of the one as a stimulus to the other, and exhortation mixed with prophetic encouragements and warnings, he tried all that patience and discriminating care could accomplish, to secure success to the diligent, and to avert impending ruin from the slothful. The industrious lad rose to wealth and honor ; and I have seen him in situations, which repaid, tenfold, all his former toils. The idle one, sunk in indolence and apathy, was lost to us ; and he might have

have died without affording us the only benefit in his power, the moral to his dream of life, had I not one evening, many years ago, in coming along Pall-Mall, met him, and recognised him as a watchman !'——' And shall I be a watchman, Sir ?' might Gertrude have said, under the influence of her panic ; but her fate had been long previously settled by Lady Luxmore's deciding, that it would be the sifting of cinders on White-chapel-mount :—a doom that gave her such a horror of the wretched object, that it was matter of great relief to her mind, even years after, to see it shovelled away.

In all his conversations Mr. Sterling paid no respect to '*la petite morale propre aux jeunes dames* : ' he would say, when any thing of the kind was recommended, ' There is no peculiar Heaven for little girls : the virtues and vices are of no sex, though Heathen mythology personified them : let girls be taught their duty in its original strength, not watered down into a mere infusion. Do not sprinkle them with goodness : let their very bones be dyed with it. Teach them what they owe to God, and they will learn what they owe their neighbor.'

Having stated thus much, it is scarcely necessary to add, except for the sake of being explicit, that he despised all shallow pretensions, and kept clear of philosophy-mongers and covert materialists. He was well acquainted with the tenets of all sects ; and the progress of deism had not escaped his attention. That adoption of every
thing

thing which came under the general term, 'French principles,' he had had opportunity of tracing from its deep radix, to its slenderest ramifications; and his opinion of it never varied: he kept equally aloof from calculators, mechanical reasoners, and the votaries of truth and rationality, who have been so liberal of their commentaries on the Divine Will; and strongly did he suspect that subsequent theory which makes obvious 'utility,' the test of moral good, and substitutes that worldly regard for reputation styled honor, and which, in its fit place, is highly commendable, for the unreserved obedience which we owe to Him who created us, and in whose hand are our destinies.

He did not demand a profession of religious faith, from authors writing merely on morals; but he watched against the artifice of *implied* infidelity; and all equivocation he abhorred*. None of the ordinary excuses borrowed from a permitted regard to interest, or the fear of giving offence, or

* His keen relish of what was ludicrous, made him often merry where a lighter mind would have been grave; but his mirth never hurt the effect of his admonitions. He admired, as an instance of dextrous equivocation, the authentic anecdote of the Jacobite Lady W——, which he had from the lips of her niece, Lady Frances C——, afterwards Marchioness of T——: 'Why do you not come to prayers,' said the old lady to Lady Frances, who was visiting her:—'Because, Madam, I hear you do not pray for the king.'——'Not pray for the king?—who says I do not pray for the king? I will have you, and those who sent you, know that I *do* pray for the king, though I do not think it necessary to tell God Almighty who is king.'

the wish to conciliate, met any toleration from him, where a disguise of truth or justifiable opinion was the result. Nor more lenient was he to the unnecessary introduction of the name of the Deity, or a reference to Providence: he preferred the adoption of those expressions, made synonymous by usage, which throw a veil over that which the mind should not approach unprepared. No profane exclamation ever escaped him: never did he attempt to gain belief by asseveration. 'We may use strong expressions,' he would say, 'till, as in taking strong liquors, we are insensible to their strength; and interjections are in general too foolish to belong to a good style*. Make no attempt, child, to get over the horror you at present feel in hearing the imprecations of the streets, or the disgust which some of my niece's visitors inspire, when they cry out, 'God bless my soul! Lord God Almighty! and Christ God!'—it is odious; it is vulgar—it is impious to a tremendous degree. The 'Yea, yea,' and 'Nay, nay,' are of a far better taste.

It remains for us to speak of the interest Mr. Sterling took in subjects not immediately literary, but connected with literature and the fine arts. We have hinted his love of music, and that it led to that branch of it which we call ancient. To mo-

* What would he have said to the lady, who at a whist-table, cried out, 'What a mercy it was that I held the ace of spades!'—or to Lady ———— when she exclaimed, 'By the living Jingo, the dog has jumped over the wall!'

dern music he had the same dislike as to many other modern things: his rule was general, but the exceptions were so many, as almost to annihilate it. Consistently with his radical notions, he thought little of melody, or of compositions where the manual dexterity of performing them, was the paramount excellence. No one who had once made the experiment, would have offered to introduce him to hear the Miss Rattletraps play lessons in succession, or Lady Altissima Macaw whoop a *Bravura*. Had Gertrude been indulged with learning music, thorough-bass would have been an indispensable part of it.

Of performers, both musical and dramatic, he judged without that prejudiced reference to early days, that so often stops discussion. He did not, with the late Lady ———, compare the grief of our great Melpomene, to that of a cheesemonger's wife, because in the season of a more accessible heart, she remembered Mrs. Cibber: he was, on the contrary, disposed to find merit wherever it subsisted, and to advert to the operation of time, as a reason, when he could not join in the enthusiasm of younger men.

In painting, his criticism would have formed the taste of a young artist. He demanded in that, as in all other things, a regular procedure from first principles, to the perfection of taste and finishing; and no beauty of coloring, nor even, in prints, any delicacy of engraving, could atone to him for a bad outline.—‘If a thing is wrong in the first stage,’ said he, ‘it may be *disguised*, but it

never can be *corrected* in finishing* :’ he knew accurately the proportions of the human figure, and every rule of perspective ; and could he have prevailed on his niece to suffer Gertrude to draw the heads of the Cartons, she might have availed herself early of his knowledge ; but Lady Luxmore thought no drawing fit for young ladies but flowers : and the disagreement produced neutrality between them, and the loss of useful knowledge to poor Gatty !

Statuary was a favorite theme of conversation with him ; and in this, as in painting, he treated with a proper disregard, all that petty criticism, which, leaving great excellencies to shift for themselves, fixes on some trifle to admire. Whenever Roubiliac’s statue of Handel was commended for the *natural* position of the slipper ;—when folds of silk and satten took attention from the animated features and the well-turned limb, he was out of all patience. He gave credit to the sagacity, but not to the connoisseurship of the sailor, who denied the head of his ship to be the Queen, because, having no ring on the proper finger, ‘she could be nothing more than the king’s *concubine*.’

All imitations,—all deceptions,—and nearly all representations of still-life, he passed over, to de-

* An opinion somewhat similar to this, he entertained in morals. When assured that a young girl who had disgusted him by symptoms of hardened effrontery, was *improved*, he replied :—‘I doubt the possibility : education may make her a hypocrite, and *hide* her character : but the character will be still the same.’ And so it proved.

your in ecstasy the magic of the pencil in those works to which the multitude cannot apply even that happy general term, *clever**; a term of praise which offended him, as did all indiscriminating commendation, or inappropriate phrase. Had Gertrude ever described the *grand* as *pretty*, or the *sublime* as *natural*, she would have been made to feel her folly severely.

Though he certainly took less interest than might have been expected, in the affairs of Greece and Italy, every branch of their arts attracted his notice; and there was, perhaps, scarcely a public building in Athens or at Rome, which he would not have recognised at sight. His topographical knowledge of the latter was so accurate, that he might easily have made it believed that he had lived there; and he could have directed a traveller to most of the best pictures in Italy.

In none of his tastes had he the smallest affectation: his perceptions were too vigorous to wait the leading of any one; and his mind was too independent to seem to be led: he could not, perhaps, have referred to any point of time when a good picture or a fine statue would have been lost on him; but he could not always acknowledge beauty where he was told he would find it. Truth, that basis of every part of his mind, seemed to form his taste, and presented to him for examples,

* The extensive usefulness of this adjective is best learnt in the Isle of Wight. We were invited to see 'a *clever* rock.'

the works, as it was then thought, of the best period of the arts. What he would have said or felt, had he lived to see the Elgin marbles imported hither, *alás!* we can but conjecture.

His moderation prevented all bigotry: he would not have accepted rudeness for sublimity, nor did he ever fastidiously reject an improvement. Scamozzi's ingenious removal of the Ionic volute to the angle of the capital, he admitted as classical; but to follow caprice or even convenience, in the proportion of a column, to bring together heterogeneous attributes, or to mingle styles, were with him crimes not to be expiated. No knowledge of him can warrant a guess at what would have been his indignation in seeing the *mélange* of tastes now crowded into our dwellings.

His taste for the study of architecture had, in early life, excited him to read Palladio in the original, and rendered him extremely hostile to the style of building in the newer parts of London, where, as he said, every thing was of the *no-nation* order. Bath, when the Circus, the Lower Crescent, and the principal houses in Queen-square, were its boast, he admired very much. Of the churches in every part of London and its vicinities, he had the most accurate knowledge: he had studied them with a scientific eye; and making use of every circumstance as it arose, to improve those intellects which were to render him back their tribute, he taught Gertrude the value of foresight by making her comprehend that of Sir Christopher Wren

Wren in preparing the arch-way under the tower of St. Magnus's church, against the probable removal of the houses on London-bridge.

The tribute paid to talents is perhaps the most gratifying that justice can offer, or modesty receive; but we must suppose there is a superior satisfaction in waiving it when presented, since Mr. Sterling might have been distinguished, in ways very soothing to human vanity, if his own rejection had not interposed. To an invitation to join the Royal Society, he replied, by a grateful acknowledgment, but an humble opinion that, being no mathematician, he deserved not a place there; and the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws offered him by one of our universities, he declined on the same modest appreciation of his right to it. But his judgment of himself never mis-led him into an exaggerated opinion of obligation. On an invitation to dinner from the late Duke of ———, he said, 'I should have received it as an honor, if I did not know that he invited the Jockey-Club last week; and in spending an evening with a Secretary of State, he, who had known how business used to be done, was not at all propitiated by high rank, to think well of the striped occupation of reading dispatches, and practising airs on the German flute.'

We have endeavored to draw faithfully, and for purposes of usefulness, the character of a man to
whom

whom Terence's eulogium justly and exactly applies; and in bestowing it on whom, we do but copy what friendship and intimate knowledge suggested—

Næi, illiusmodi jam nobis magna civium
Penuria est. Homo antiquâ virtute ac fide

and we will conclude it, leaving it reluctantly! by remarking how small, even in the judgment of Gertrude, was the dust of human imperfection, weighed against a life unstained even by a vicious thought*. There was far more of Cato than of Cicero in Mr. Sterling's composition; and there was a time, perhaps, when, with the great Sir Thomas Browne, he might have thought the state of the world admitted no milder resolve, than 'to do no injury and suffer none;' but his severity was of that description which rather waits permission to relax, than seeks increased tension; and whenever he met with those admirable tempers, that are oil to a perturbed ocean, he made no opposition to the physical effect. His niece knew not that she was bestowing great praise on him, when she reproached him, in his latter years, that any one pretending to be religious, might pick his pocket. The

* We do not like to omit, though, as we have not low tastes to describe, we hardly know where to introduce it, one peculiarity in Mr. Sterling's character or feelings. An invitation to dine on turtle or venison would have offended him: he thought the foible must be very prominent when the bait was so exposed.

censure was not true in its fact ; but he was as much indebted to her as if it had been, as it only told that, whatever might be his opinion of his fellow-creatures, he could not suppose them as corrupt as they are *.

Those faults of his character under which Gertrude suffered, venial in themselves, and even salutary in their effects, hold out an important lesson on the consideration necessary in selecting our domestic society. His pretty amiable wife died too early to make any change in him ; and had she lived, we can suppose nothing but his kind acknowledgment, that even her solitudes, though now and then a little teasing, were too flattering for reprehension, and too well meant not to be laudable ; but in domesticating himself with his niece, he froze his heart ; and perhaps without the juvenile warmth of Gertrude's character, it might have indurated. But the extreme point of Lady Luxmore's jealousy formed that of her dominion

* We repent of having omitted another proof of his candor. To secure Gertrude from the danger of despising persons remarkable for any natural deficiency, he told the reproof he had met with, early in life. ' I was,' said he, ' invited to a private concert, where was a man so disposed to prate, and so little able to bear a part in any conversation, that between the acts, he afforded great diversion to us young ones. The master of the house came up to us, and addressing himself to me as the ringleader, he said, ' Young gentleman, if you possess advantages over others of your fellow-creatures, it is by God's goodness, not your merit ; and to use them to deride others, is not the best way of shewing your gratitude.'

over

over him ; and had he survived her, the benign influence of his setting sun might have obtained for him a regard as tender as the respect entertained for him, by all who knew him, was sincere.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Fastidious grief. Experiments. Religious opinions. An opportune visit. A new master. A well-behaved young man. How to make girls good for something. A fair warning. The young man saucy.

THERE is an occupation in domestic sorrow, that, for a time, braces the mind against its weight: there is a succeeding pause which lets it down to crush us. We cannot meditate while we act; we cannot forbear to meditate when we have ceased from action:—every day of the first six that succeed a death, brings its employ; and no one but the mourner knows how greedily the wounded heart seizes on every species of foreign medicine, even if it be irritating: but when the bell has ceased to toll, when the atchievement is fixed, and when the next behest of the survivors of the family, is obeyed by those whose new apparel bespeaks the closing scene from which they are returned, then we feel that all is done, and that we are at leisure to grieve!

But come, come! it is not so sad with all; and after the day of the funeral, on which day Lady Luxmore really did *not* go out, she had settled herself in a very decent submission to ‘the nature of things.’ But it was not so quickly that Gertrude could reconcile herself to the dismal chasm.

Mr.

Mr. Sterling was now never absent from her ideas; and even where she had not been used to see him, he seemed to her to be with her. To be diligent became impossible: to be frivolous was almost necessary; and to suffer in silence was her highest prudence. Needle-work was her resource; and the motion of her hand rocked her anguish of heart. O! what a low estate for Gertrude Aubrey! at nearly twenty-one years of age!

The edge of grief soon wore through this imperfect sheath; and any ideas appearing preferable to her own, which were not yet roused enough to amuse her with selfish care, she wished to try to read; but the experiment, in its first propensity, led to the study; and the vacant chair would have said aloud, 'Your and my master is gone.' She, therefore, contented herself with her own little stock of literature; and, a novice in sorrow, she imagined that a subject the nearest connected with that which engrossed her ideas, and which would present images most in unison with them, would best medicine her malady. She seized on Young's 'Night Thoughts,' which, with an excellent verbal commentary on their unequal merit, Mr. Sterling had given her: ——— but poetry held dazzling colors to a weak sight; and, fancying she could never read any more, she laid down her book, and pursued her hemming.

The countess had not been wanting in such kindness as she could offer. She could not judge of the loss Gertrude had sustained; but she was not insensible to the bodily fatigue she had undergone,

gone, and, without grudging, she allowed her the visits of the apothecary, who was too sagacious to insist on her taking food, and too honest to give her medicine.

If doing as we would be done by, is merit, Lady Luxmore might now claim it. Seeing Gertrude dissatisfied with her book, she offered her what she was herself turning over—volumes of old newspapers; but Gertrude had begun to perceive that grief requires delicate shading. Dr. Young, indeed, threw the shovel and the mattock at her, and beckoned her to the charnel-house, the school of the inconsiderate: the coarse corrective might irritate, but it could not heal in so recent an excoriation. Neither would images totally irrelative to those before her eyes, do good: they could take no hold on what they were to remove; and every vain attempt made it more difficult to attempt again.

The next experiment could not fail; for it led her to the word of Him who told her that those are blessed who die, and those shall be supported who live, in his faith and fear.

This was her meditation and her comfort, and she could well bear to be wretched with such consolation and support.

Let him who would abate any thing of the reverence due to a promulgation so inestimable, the only chart in the ocean of a dissolving world, visit the dying, and see those who stand round, or who have just quitted the bed of death. No decision of presuming judgment, no subterfuge of dishonest criticism, will make the soul that has pruned its
wing

wing for Heaven, stop to regard caveats against the authenticity of that which a corrupt mind, or an evil heart of unbelief,' has made it suit its practice or its views to question. When an honest man humbly hopes that he has obeyed the Divine Command in hearing HIM whom a supernatural voice styled the Son of God; when, he flatters himself that, in cases of temptation, disdaining the allurements of the world, he has preferred that One Thing which he has been taught from his infancy was alone important; he will not be put off with paltry corrections of truths which the host of Heaven have testified, or inclined to explain his soaring ideas by the wants or the appetites of the body. He will not listen to the *candid* information of any one who, to rid him of superstition, refers to his own unshackled practice, and in effect says, ' You see me happy; you know my estimation in the world; but I have never given into old wives' doctrines. At my own peril I declare, and I have striven to convince all within my reach, that the testimony of ages is false, and the common consent of the best men an error. HIM who was born, who lived, and who died, as no other mortal ever did—HIM whose birth was predicted, almost from the creation of the world, and of whose re-assumption of the glory he had left, there were ocular witnesses whom I should credit, were my earthly inheritance in question—HIM whose coming in the character of an avenging judge we are warned to look for in trembling—HIM I pull down from the throne of his Father, and assert that he was scarce more than one

one

one of us—and calling it idolatry to admit that which I cannot disprove, I explain away, or I erase, all those passages of the New Testament which do not suit my purpose *.

If there is an obeying muscle in the frame of a creature thus insulted and schooled; if voice, if look be left to scare the unbeliever from his side, will they not be called forth? If the moribond can reason, will he not say, ‘And what then? you may pay the forfeit of your temerity—a God of mercy will pity, will pardon and set right those who err because they dare not dispute, and who value the light he has bestowed on them too highly to risk its extinction.

How shall the agonised attendant on the bed of the dying—how shall the widowed mourner, who has seen all that rendered this world’s best gifts valuable, interred in the grave with the one who shared them, receive such strange doctrine?—Shall they not say, ‘Go to your moral law; pride yourself on your sufficient merits; disclaim all support, all

* We would refer—but there are stomachs that can digest poisons. We therefore confine ourselves to a fact, and say, that when we have quoted the *new sense* given to passages, particularly to that in the Gospel according to St. Luke, where we are desired—it is almost blasphemy even to record it—to understand by *the one thing needful*, that our Saviour meant to say, *he should eat but of one dish*—those who have *admired, recommended, and introduced* this profane and unfair production of a sect, have denied that such absurdity could exist. We shudder even in recording what others have dared to fabricate. We can only hope ‘they know not what they do.’

mediation ;

mediation ; but leave to us, who have not been so mis-taught, who have seen no cause so to learn, and who feel the necessity of a Redeemer in the alloy that even our best actions carry with them—leave us the only arm ‘mighty to save,’ when the world and all its falsities sink from our feet : leave us that sustaining hope, not less exalted because it is humble, which will bear us on its wings over the abyss of death. Hide yourself from the wrath of an insulted judge, and cease to aggravate your crime by wearing the title, and retaining the forms of a Christian.’

While the Sacred Writings continued the only palatable aliment of Gertrude’s thoughts, the kindness of a stranger sent her, with a note, a little book, neither learned nor peculiarly wise, nor very ingenious ; but which offered itself, in modest, pious, and consolatory language—the language of unfeigned submission and fortitude under a heavy loss, to succeed that which might, by a pause, become again more useful. This humble volume, entitled ‘A friendly Visit to the House of mourning,’ she read, till every sentence was familiar to her ; and she was honestly gratified to find that sermons on practical subjects, and of sound doctrine, did not disgust her after it. To these succeeded the serious papers in ‘the Rambler,’ and other productions of the same greatly contemplative mind ; and with them she coaxed the waywardness of her feelings. Grief wears a channel in the human heart, in which it runs easier than when it is
making

making its course through a region in which it had heretofore been a stranger.

The only circumstance that occurred to cheer her, was a visit from Mr. Sydenham, whom the death of Mr. Sterling had made overleap all the barriers Lady Luxmore's dislike placed in his way. She had behaved ill to him till she had not effrontery enough to behave well ; and therefore sheltering herself under the natural supposition, that having just lost a near relation, she must be too low in spirits to admit visitors, she gave Gertrude the great advantage and satisfaction of seeing him alone.

Her kind friend was affected by her dress and her countenance; and his own feelings obliged him to let her indulge her's. As soon as she could listen, he told her that the earl and his son were at Luxmore, and would be shortly in London, and that it was by Lord Luxmore's desire, as well as prompted by his own solicitude, that he had left his home and them, to know of what assistance she might stand in need. The death of Lady Mary, which had taken place there, had not permitted them to stop in town, or they would have seen her in their way.

Gertrude could give no other answers to his many kind queries, than what her personal appearance at the countess's conveyed : to the question, whether Mr. Sterling had left a will, she could make no reply but that of perfect ignorance ; for on occasions when Lady Luxmore's *homme d'affaires* had a conference, she had been so often sent away, that she

she now needed no hint to retire ; but to Mr. Sydenham's expectation that Mr. Sterling might probably have left her a few thousand pounds, she could answer decidedly that he had not done so. He expressed his regret ; but it was a regret that she could not share : she had never had the smallest reason given her to expect, therefore she could not feel disappointed ; and to make kindness of one sort a ground of claim for that of another, was not at all consistent with the natural sentiments or acquired opinions of Gertrude Aubrey.

Nothing could have occurred so opportunely consoling to her, as this kind visit. It convinced her that she lived in the remembrance of those in whom, more than in any others, she could confide ; and Mr. Sydenham was too explicit in the repetition of his hospitable offers, to admit of any painful recollection that, for a home, she now depended on the very precarious life of the countess. Mrs. Brett's message to her was of the most maternal kindness. Miss Brett's marriage still waited the arrival of Captain Sydenham, who was returning to his country, distinguished in a way the most honourable to himself, the most gratifying to such a father ; and she joined her mother in expressions of affection, and the earnest wish to be serviceable to Miss Aubrey. ' Our young couple,' said Mr. Sydenham, ' must have a house in London ; and if my niece's health, which we are all persuaded is injured greatly by the anxiety of her situation, admits of living in town, she has spirit and address enough to brave and to smooth all difficulties that may oppose her

her shewing you any kindness ; and as to my son, I hope you will always find a brother in him.'

Mr. Sydenham called again before he left town ; and the countess having desired she might not be troubled with him, as ' she was certain Lord Luxmore had only sent him to pry into her uncle's affairs,' Gertrude saw him again alone. He was then in possession of the contents of Mr. Sterling's will, and could tell her that the countess was sole executrix to it. It gave her, with some reference to a deed in her custody, every thing for her life, and to the viscount afterwards, excepting about seven-hundred a year, which Lord Portargis was to take on coming of age.

The first shock of her great loss over, and the subsequent sorrow giving way to a calm regret, Gertrude might have felt a new misery—the will to employ herself, and in some measure the ability to apply—but the impossibility of finding any species of labor that would not destroy all the little fortitude and composure she had gained.

But here interposed a convenience, a comfort, a support that sprung from the good habits in which she had been practised, and which, sufficiently resembling that employment to which she was accustomed, to prevent the violence of distraction, and sufficiently dissimilar to save her from drawing an afflicting comparison, found her a salutary occupation.

While engaged for Mr. Sterling, she had sometimes been so fortunate as to suggest what was worth the attention of some one of his friends. She

would bestow hours on a search to oblige; she could go with accuracy from reference to reference; and he was too just to conceal her share in that for which he received acknowledgment. The consequence of this was, in one instance in particular, the continuation of a friendship towards her, which had been Mr. Sterling's; and her *fagging* abilities being known, she was asked to read over the manuscript, and to correct the printing, of a work of scientific initiation. Let the terms in which this honor was conferred, serve as a proof of that liberal candor which accompanies what may be called *well-digested fame*.—‘You will read over, my dear young lady, said Mr. ———, carefully, critically, and unsparingly, the manuscript I send you. Remember, I am no relation of the archbishop of Granada, therefore be not afraid of my resenting any degree of ingenuousness. Your want of information on the subject, is a great recommendation to me: since if I am clear to *your* comprehension, I hope I shall not be blamed for want of perspicuity; therefore be sure you understand me, and if you cannot, you must make me alter and amend till you do.’

Here was no flattery, no compliment that could do any harm:* it was impossible that she could
be

* On the subject of bestowing praise on the young, the most amiable persons often need reproof. We have pleasure in recording one instance where none could be needed. The present Bishop of D—— was of an evening music-party with ourselves, where the uncommon performance of a child was

be made vain by a congratulation on her ignorance, or that the subordinate employment which she had exercised from her infancy, could now make her arrogant. But the comfort she was beginning to derive from her opportune adoption into a new and agreeable literary service, received every useful correction that the countess could bestow on it, and demanding to see the whole of the correspondence, which her occupation, the near neighborhood of her employer, and his delightful temper made necessary, frequent, and sometimes sportive, her jealousy roused itself; and the character of Mr. — as a married clergyman, and not much younger than Mr. Sterling, precluding all fear of the power of ‘Miss’s charms’ in one way, she had nothing left to say on restoring his letters and notes, but ‘a fine thing to be learned!—O! Miss, you will soon have all the men in the world your humble servants. —Mr. —’s other wife, &c.’ expressions which passed with electric celerity from her ears to her fingers’ ends, and there acted like the application

one of the attractions. The most unbounded praise was bestowed on her, praise more than equivalent to an exhibition nearer connected with manual dexterity, than with intellect. The young performer was presented to his lordship, as if to receive superior commendation: he said enough not to disappoint; but he concluded with observing to her that the wonder was, not her execution, but her years, and encouraged her by adding, ‘Your eyes and fingers, you are sensible, were given you; therefore it is no merit to possess them; but as you know what they can do, you must be diligent in your use of them; and then, I doubt not, you will, in time, play as well as the lady who sat down to the instrument before you.’

of nettles ; but she never replied. It would have been worse than folly to have given way to such opposition. Mrs. Anne Britton being now again in London, gave her utmost sanction to the arrangement, and Lady Luxmore could only pursue the plan of *speaking italics*.

One of the agreeable circumstances attending this inherited friendship, was an occasional invitation to walk, which a kind and parental solicitude for her recovery, her health, and cheerfulness, made her friend repeat whenever he could make leisure. It was seldom, very seldom, that it could be accepted ; but perhaps the kindness offered was as cheering as the walk would have been. None but the despised can tell how very sweet it is, not to be despised.

But days did not pass now as heretofore ; every thing was as in a submerged city : in the state in which it had been overwhelmed. The mill remained, but the stream that moved it, was stopped : there was business going on, but it reached not Mr. Sterling's study ; and in every reference to the books there, Gertrude met some dagger. She had sketched a little female figure, which had pleased him : he had used it to mark the place of his leaving off in the book he was reading.—O ! when she found this little woman !

Early in the summer, the daily papers announced the arrival in London of the Earl Luxmore, and 'his accomplished son and heir' Viscount Portargis, and on the same day, the latter made his mother a morning-visit while she was at dinner.

The

The Viscount was now, as was Gertrude, within a few months of twenty-one years of age ; and a residence amongst men, and men of various manners, whatever it had done for his lordship's information, had certainly added to his external advantages, that of a manly deportment. His boyish shyness of his mother, because she displeased him, seemed lost in more tolerating feelings, and in a sense of what was demanded from his character : he had much to say, though perhaps little to tell ; and that natural love for Gatty which seemed to rekindle at sight of her, was as conspicuous, in his improved manners, as it had been in his infant vehemence ; he made her stand up, that he might judge of her height ; he looked on her hands for the marks of little injuries received at play ; he enquired what she had been doing, and heard from his mother, with a disposition very different from that which conveyed the information, that ' Miss was as bookish as ever, and vastly learned.'—' I always said she would be a good girl,' he replied : ' I wish I was half as good : but she must not be too serious ;—you look graver than you used to do. I don't love gravity, you know ; it always frightens me.'

Circumstances had indeed increased the seriousness of her disposition, into pensiveness ; but perhaps the viscount himself did not know how great a share this very propensity had in fixing his partiality : had she resembled those women with whom he was accustomed to converse, or rather to lose time, she would have come within the reach of comparison ; and the comparison might sometimes
have

have been against her; but those who liked Gertrude, liked her not with any relation to the merit or demerit of others; it was for her own sake that she was esteemed; and she had never forfeited the sentiment, nor was it one that depended on time or chance. Whatever were the colors of her character, they never faded, and by blending into an unobtrusive white, when they were approached by others, they bartered the power of injuring for the security of remaining uninjured.

Lady Luxmore's sentiments of her son's partiality for Gertrude, had never come to any thing resembling opinion. If she was proud of him for any thing, it certainly was not for the endowments of his head, or the virtues of his heart; but she was very well persuaded in her own mind, that he would never be such a fool as to think seriously of Gertrude, however fond he might have been of her as a child; and had her *protégée* been the object of her *kindness*, her ladyship's shrewd sagacity would have made her warn her to distrust right honorable love, not yet at years of discretion. The subject had been hinted to her by some kind friends, as calling for caution; but, intrenched in her own conviction, she had replied, 'Take my word, the boy will never be such a blockhead; and as for the girl, if she is fool enough to fancy it, nobody can pity her when she finds her mistake.'

But the suspense of her belief of the danger, did not affect the decision of her judgment on the supposition: her incredulity would not have abated her feeling of disapprobation at any discovery of the

the truth ; Gertrude would have been left to her fate, whatever that fate might prove, on the first moment of detection ; for Lady Luxmore could not, nor could it be expected she should, see that what marred the Viscount's fortune, might make his character. She had never asked herself what sort of a wife he *needed*, or what could contribute to his happiness ; and had she questioned herself ever so closely, the odds were against her thinking of ' Miss.' She kept in her mind, it is true, a record of those heiresses, who, like the fruit of an asparagus-bed, might be calculated on in a given time ; and one of these, it mattered not which, she doubted not, would fall, ' in the course of things,' to the lot of the Viscount ; but the proverb ' Marry your son when you will,' kept her tranquil ; and whether he married or not, she cared little.' The only expression that ever came near the subject, was that of thanking Heaven, when a bad marriage took place, that she had no ' maux of a daughter to trouble her with her amours.' The thanksgiving answered many purposes : it shewed her gratitude : it reminded Gertrude that she was no daughter, and it anathematised whatever could come under the description of love.

It was but a small share of Portargis's affection that was claimed by Gertrude's acquirements. As he would have felt disgraced by her ignorance, he was *en masse* gratified by her distance from it ; but of the detail of her mind or its furniture, he could not judge ; and either in commending it, or in contributing to it, he felt no otherwise than he would have

have done, had elegant trifles absorbed it. If her passion had been dogs or cats, or birds, or china, or diamonds, or that higher class of pleasures 'four in hand,' still with her head and heart, if they could have consisted with such pursuits, his *connate* prejudice would have supplied what was wanting, and she would have been, as much as now, the object of his tenderness.

But in the present state of her endowments, had his lordship possessed the friendship of any one who would have had the kindness to see his mind safe over the babbling brook of folly—had there been in morals any friend like the sagacious Caveat Warner, who instructs sucking connoisseurs in bidding for pictures, or would he have lent his attention to one half of what he had gotten by heart—he would, in time, and at a time when it might have saved him from doing a foolish thing, have perceived how useful, how generous, how dignified is that mode of education for the companions of men, which, with duty for its impulse, and God for its object, places them beyond the reach of any power but that to which it is their pride to submit; which, in prosperity, secures them from the opprobrious title of husband-hunting fools, and in adversity removes them from among the *fruges consumere natas*. 'There cannot,' as our incomparable friend P—— M—— observes, 'be a happier being than a girl educated on such principles. When sorrows come upon her, for are we not all born to sorrow? she will, by having been accustomed to yield her will to that of others, find the blessing

blessing of being *able to obey*: when joy is imparted to her, she will, by having been instructed that it is more than she deserves, or had a right to expect, receive it with gratitude and thanks, and return to Almighty God her unbounded thanks, not only for all the blessings to which she is sensible, but for enabling her, as she will do, to bear up with patience, fortitude, and resignation, against all her appointed trials of mind, body, or estate.'—Forgive us, dear P——; for the quotation—it was irresistible.

The visit proceeded, and ended agreeably. To the negative question put by the countess, 'I suppose I am not to be honored with a sight of your father,' the viscount had replied, 'Why not? I suppose he will come when he can; but when that will be, I'm sure I can't tell; for he had fifty people to see this evening, and, I suppose, there will be five hundred to be seen to-morrow. But I shall call here to-morrow before noon, and then probably you may hear.'

He took his leave, perhaps not exactly in the way he would have done some years before, neither as he would, had his mother been absent, but he took leave affectionately and yet properly; and Gertrude, if her memory had not been kept in good order by practice, might have forgotten, for an hour or two, her lowly estate. She sunk to it, however, very soon after he had withdrawn, when her ladyship, who seemed to misunderstand his unexceptionable deportment as a ground for reprehension and caution, begged Miss, as a favor, to re-
member

member, as she supposed Portargis would be now 'backwards and forwards,' that 'he and she were no longer boy and girl,' and that 'it was not for her to give herself airs.'

Gertrude was piqued: 'I scarce know,' she replied, 'what your ladyship means:—did I behave improperly?'

'O dear! no, ma'am, by no means—it is impossible *you* can behave improperly.—I only meant that I'm sure Portargis's father would not be pleased, if he saw him paying you attentions. I only desire you to remember you are not boy and girl:—it's nothing to me, to be sure, I'm nobody.—All I say is, take care of yourself, Miss Aubrey—you have found friends all your life, but they are under no obligation to *you*.—You have only to look to yourself.—*We* shall take care of Lord Portargis.'

'Twas the first time Gertrude had ever heard a hint of even intended unanimity between Lord and Lady Luxmore; but it was not the first time she had considered her own situation. She returned modest assurances of good conduct, as explicit as she dared make them without recognising the honor she was warned against admitting into her calculation; and overcoming her feelings by telling them they had no choice, she felt the evening-airing in Hyde-Park a relief.

The viscount's forenoon next day was five o'clock, and he was the bearer of something like a civil message from his father, regretting that the extreme press of business, and the necessity of
going

going to Windsor that evening, would postpone, till the day after the next, his calling to pay his respects to Lady Luxmore and Miss Aubrey. 'But what's the matter?' 'Gatty,' said the viscount, 'you look graver than even yesterday.'

'O! fine ladies are apt to have changeable tempers,' said her ladyship. 'Miss Aubrey is so taken up with her studies—as I say, the whole house is a school-room.'

Gertrude bit her lips, and looked up as if to ask if this were just. 'You love her, I perceive,' said his lordship to his mother, 'just as much as you used to do:—poor girl! it's pity she's obliged to mind you—I'm sure I would not—so good morning to you. Gatty, will you come and take a walk in the park; the air will do you good, better than sitting and stewing here.'

'Do you suppose I have lost my senses, Portar-gis?' said she faintly.

He had been going, but his mother was silent—he sat down again, and noticed Gertrude's employment. At the first moment when the countess's head was turned, she gave him a look of supplication—he understood it, and again behaved well. Lady Luxmore, never consistent, even with her own character, went out of the room. Gertrude would have followed, as if to receive commands—'I don't want *you*,' said she repellingly, as she shut the door between them.

She sat down again. 'This is too bad,' said the viscount with some interjections; 'this cannot be borne. But, Gatty, do you know I am astonished

tonished at my mother's looks ; why, she looks a hundred. I heard she was very bad ; but I wish I could have half an hour's chat with you. We must think seriously ; Lord, Lord ! how she does look !—She'll die ; and where will you be ?

The return of Lady Luxmore, and the arrival of an humble visitor, saved all necessity of reply ; and the viscount hurried away to dine, and accompany his father to Windsor.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Probabilities. Right honorable punctuality. An interesting communication. An invitation to elope. The matter considered. Advisers seldom of much use. The solicitation. The remembered injury. The decided answer. Matrimonial prospect. Misplaced caution. Richmond. The deputy.

IT was impossible, even for crushed Gertrude, not to revolve in her mind these broken sentences, or to look forward, without palpitation, to the day which was again to introduce Lord and Lady Luxmore to each other's acquaintance: her own interest in the circumstance was considerable: it might alleviate much that she had to endure, or it might render her situation intolerable: it might smooth all difficulties, or increase them infinitely: the value of Mr. Sydenham's repeated expressions of kindness, now, rose higher than ever in her estimation; and the kindling character of her mind, carried her, in idea, already to Luxmore rectory-house as her temporary home, and to her own exertions, as her only dependence under Providence.

But the day appointed, and seven after it, arrived, without any but public news of Lord Luxmore or his son; and the intelligence the papers gave, extended only to three days, when they were spoken of as making a visit, half ministerial, half friendly

friendly, to Lord ——— in the neighborhood of Richmond. Lady Luxmore exprest neither surprise nor concern: 'she supposed, when the earl had nothing else to do, she might be honored with a visit, or perhaps he might, have altered his mind: it was all the same to her; but Gertrude wondered, and though silent was uneasy, and wondered at herself for wondering, and was angry with herself for being uneasy; and when a carriage or a visitor on foot broke in on the dull suspense, and some uninteresting person was introduced, she felt, in all its force, the truth of the wise man's discovery, that 'hope deferred, maketh the heart sick;' and Oh! what a deadly sickness it is!

The suspense was ended; and Lord Portargis called at his mother's, on horseback, so early one morning, that a person, given to suspicion, might have imagined he hoped to have arrived before she was up; but lying in bed in a morning was never one of her ladyship's faults; and she and Gertrude were at breakfast.

The countess, in her admonition on his first visit, had predicted that Portargis might be 'backwards and forwards;' and if that handy phrase means vacillation of mind as well as of footsteps, the prediction was certainly accomplished in this case; for his present temper towards his mother was not at all of a piece with that of his first visit; and her observation after he was gone, that she did not know what to make of him, was not merely *verbiage*.

He opened the errand on which he came, whatever

ever it was, by expressing his astonishment at his mother's rising so early, when she could have nothing to do,—which would have produced a little bickering dialogue, had he not interrupted it by a remark upon his soul, that the day was amazingly hot, and the roads uncommonly dusty.

A few questions respecting his movements, let out, as it were perchance, or in 'the course of things' the intelligence that Lord Luxmore, in trying a newly-purchased horse, had been thrown; and was then lying, unable to move, at the Castle at Richmond.

Gertrude was alarmed, and tried to alarm the countess; but drawing on her only a succession of reproving taunts, she desisted, and would have enquired of Portargis the degree of injury and of danger attending the accident; but no; that which was apathy before, was now turned into perverse anxiety; and to proceed in any way was impossible. The only procurable information was that of Portargis's intention of going back to Richmond, and returning the next morning to bring news.

He was departing; but recollecting himself, he asked for a sheet of paper, and wrote a hasty letter, which he wafered, and put in his pocket. He had quitted the room, when he again came back, and calling to Gertrude, said, 'Tell me what place is this a view of.' Supposing he had called her to look at one of the prints on the staircase, she went out at the room-door: he put the letter he had written into her hand, and ran down stairs.

Unpractised

Unpractised in artifice, she returned to the drawing-room, with the letter still in her hand; and her fate might have been determined that hour, had not Lady Luxmore gone into the next room at the moment when she obeyed Lord Portargis's call, and remained there long enough to give her time to see that it would be the height of imprudence, as well as extremely dishonorable, to disclose what she had received. It told her that his father, though much hurt, was in no danger, but that his recovery would be a sad tedious business; that he could not endure to see the treatment she received from his mother, whom, for her sake, he heartily wished in Heaven; that he saw but one way of putting an end to it, a way to which no objection could possibly be made, as he found, by Mr. Sterling's will, he was to come into the possession of seven-hundred a-year the day he was of age, and of that period, she knew, he wanted but a few months: that a friend of his, a very good fellow! would accommodate him till that time; and therefore he hoped she would not be so silly and squeamish as to make difficulties.—Having laid the bridle on the neck of his imagination, through the scrawling of one side of paper, the next told her, as it were in a postscript, that his project was a Scots marriage, for which he had prepared every thing; and to effect this, he should very much urge his mother's coming to Richmond to see his father, as it would be easy to get off from the hotel if Gertrude was of the party, and if she was not, he would be in town, even if then at Richmond,

mond, in an hour after his mother's arrival, and should expect to find her ready to accompany him.

What we fancy we wish; what we wish we hope; what we hope we expect; and to the expectation of some people, there can be no bounds. Lord Portargis had thought on this business, till he forgot it was not equally familiar to Gertrude; and he had planned it, without the smallest recollection that his delusion must have vanished, and his love instantly have followed it, the moment any one had hinted to him that he had done a foolish, and she a dishonest thing. It never entered his imagination, too ardent for any thing cool to come near it, that she might be too wise to be thus caught. 'Poor girl!' thought he, if he *did* think, 'she is so wretched, that any change would be for the better; and therefore it is impossible she can refuse what no one else would hesitate to accept joyfully; rank now! wealth by and by! a husband and a coronet!—and then we have always been attached in a way that leaves no question.'

All hearts will not always answer ingenuously when they are bid, or when they would do it, if in their power. Could Gertrude have got at the meaning of her's, she must, in committing it to words, have encouraged the viscount to think himself not greatly mistaken. The report would have been, that Lord Portargis was, perhaps, not the man suited, very exactly, to promote, or even to preserve her happiness, or to whom she could, without many anxieties, commit it; but yet that, from

habits of affection and gratitude, she could, without aversion, and with acknowledgments of unmerited distinction, suffer his father and mother thus to dispose of her; but there was one sentence her heart would have spoken much louder; this was, that, without parental sanction, nothing could influence her; and there was another, of a very different nature, which it would not even have whispered—no, not even to her.

One of the peculiar advantages of her situation, as we have in a former case remarked, was the having no one to whom she could intrust her confidence: she had, therefore, no means of lessening her responsibility, or of getting rid of a moiety of the blame attaching to a foolish action; and this preserved her mind in its integrity of exertion. ‘I shall have nobody to accuse but myself,’ is a most useful caveat against doing that which we may repent of.

To rely on her own judgment, had been one of the precepts of her ever-to-be-lamented friend, Mr. Sterling. ‘You will find,’ said he, ‘little advantage in the advice of any one person: however inclined you may be, and however able you may be, to detail the circumstances on which an opinion is to be founded, none can understand them or enter into them, as completely as yourself, and after all, either a wish to indulge you, or an inclination to thwart you, may take the place of a candid judgment. If, dissatisfied with the advice of one person, you resort to a second, you will need an umpire; and that must be yourself. Remembering

membering this, she was not accustomed to seek counsellors; not having been used to seek, she seldom felt the want of them; and at the present moment, though the subject fully occupied her mind, she did not shrink from a decision, so clear in the point of duty. ‘Can Portargis think me capable of acting so?’ was a question she could not satisfactorily answer.

How she should conduct herself, was not so difficult to decide. To avoid all private conversation; to return no answer to his letter; and, if possible, to avert the going to Richmond, were all the injunctions of her prudence; the two former she thought she could observe; her power in the last, was more problematical.

At seven the next morning, determined to secure an interview, came his lordship: she was up and employed, and soon aware of his arrival; but she stirred not: a message was carried to the countess’s chamber: she sent her own servant with orders to Miss Aubrey, to go down and learn how Lord Luxmore was, and to make breakfast for the viscount, if he was in haste.—Now, what became of her resolution? She had no choice of action: she was a dependent; and she obeyed.

The earl was not better: but his son was not absorbed by the disappointment: he dismissed the subject; and when Gertrude returned from making her report, she had to overcome the strongest arguments, the most seducing rhetoric, and the most convincing logic that the viscount could bring out from the storehouse of his brain. The achievement

was not too great for her ; but unfortunately, her antagonist was one of those reasoners who, never conquering, are never conquered ; and when we have argued with them for an hour, we are just where we set out ; unless it happens to us to have lost our temper.

She had now heard the most explicit and the most flattering assurances of perfect happiness awaiting only her grasp ; and if she had referred only to her knowledge of *the world*, she might have believed one half of what she heard ; but she had read, she had thought, and, with the law open before her, she had been brought up at the feet of a Gamaliel in morals : she could say by heart ‘ If thou hast the brow to endure the name of traitor, perjured, or oppressor, yet cover thy face when ingratitude is thrown at thee. If that degenerate vice possess thee, hide thyself in the shadow of thy shame, and pollute not noble society ;’ and the viscount’s eloquence gained no ground. ‘ Think, of your father, dear Portargis,’ said she.

‘ I do,’ he replied ; ‘ and it is thinking on him that makes me so urgent ; in his situation, he will know nothing of the matter till it is all settled ; and that will save a monstrous deal of disagreeable and useless trouble. I am sure it is best to be prepared for whatever turn this business may take : for, if any thing were to happen to my father, I should be hampered with, the Lord knows who, for guardians, between this and October ; and we might not be able to get off.—As to my mother, she’s
going

going to the Antipodes apace. Why, Gatty, how you look!—Are you going mad?’

‘O! Portargis! how can you be so unfeeling!’

‘I am not unfeeling: I’m sure I feel for my father; and I’m excessively sorry about his accident; but what good will my thinking of it do?—I can’t cure him; and we must think a little of ourselves. Remember, Gertrude, I have always loved *you*;—and it is my love for you that makes me appear unfeeling.—I always said you should be my wife; and perhaps I might, to please you, have waited till I was of age, and had nobody’s leave to ask; but my mother provoked me; it is all her fault: she always makes me hate her; but my father I really could love: any body might love such a man; and that, I think, is saying as much as you can expect, all things considered. Remember the fever he gave me with his wager: I can never forget that. Of what value could my life be to Lord Luxmore, when he betted it against fifty guineas? O! Gertrude! what a father and mother have I had!—how he could ever think of marrying such a woman, I cannot conceive; if ever they take the liberty to be angry with me for my choice, I shall tell them a piece of my mind; they may rely on it. Let me do what I will, I am sure I never can be blamed. That bet of fifty guineas!—fifty guineas to make me ill or good for nothing! only tell that, and any body may judge whether my father deserves that I should consider him.’

‘You misunderstand it entirely, dear Portargis.

I am

I am sure, could you have seen your father during your illness, you could not have doubted his love.'

'Well, well!—it is *my* love, not *his*, that is, just now, uppermost in my mind:—Gertrude, will you go!'

'Certainly not.'

Without another word, his lordship dashed out of the room, and left the house, with all the usual *costume* of extreme anger. Gertrude, frightened equally at his stay and his retreat, and dreading being questioned, was at once unwilling and anxious to see Lady Luxmore. But the eccentricities of her son were always largely allowed for by the countess; and little was said on the subject, beyond a reprehension of 'Miss' for not learning when fresh tidings might be expected.

When next alone, it was impossible that Gertrude should not question whether she had not been too precipitate; but afraid of listening to insidious suggestions, she instantly answered herself that she had no cause to impeach her own conduct, or to relax her firmness. She had too much friendship for Portargis to accuse herself of any unkind feeling towards him; but her reason told her, that to join in his madness, or to give it any encouragement, would be to surpass it. Whatever was the promise of his early years, and which, in the habitual partiality of her judgment, she could not but think very flattering to the wishes and hopes of those solicitous for his well-doing, she feared he still

wanted tutelage: she felt it, indeed, impossible that he should not prepossess all whom he strove to conciliate; but in his volatility, and notwithstanding the uniform return of his heart towards her, she could much more readily foresee the chance of his making many women miserable, than that of his making any one happy. With the exception of his sentiments towards her, she could, in all he said on the subject of his female intimacies, see clearly more the maxims of Abbé Bonfront, than of Mr. Sydenham, in his practice: the 'hair-breadth scapes' he had had in escorting women of rank to sights and public places; the difficulty of dividing himself at a ball; the unfortunate construction put on his *bagatelle*-presents; the traps laid for him by parents, and some symptoms of having wavered and doubted on the point of fixing, made her perceive that he valued himself on his celebrity in the female world, and induced a suspicion that, however the sight of her, and the want of any other object, might establish his constancy, it could not be judged of till he had seen a little more of the world: he spoke of men 'harrassed by attachments,' into the nature of which she dared not enquire: the faults of a wife seemed, in his code of conjugal laws, to exonerate a husband; and he quoted Abbé Bonfront for an axiom, recommending it to every one 'if they could not be happy in one way, to try at it in another; as we certainly were not sent into the world to be miserable.' In the height of fashion, in new mourning, he seemed, even in all the agitation of his visits, to

pay

pay himself, by his own attentions, for the want of observers: he talked of his father before the glass, which he complained of as being the worst he ever looked in: he pulled up his boots, and fetched up his shirt-collar, even when persuading Gertrude to the northern expedient. She could not make proper allowances for all this, because she knew few fashionable young men: she, therefore, thought it very absurd; and hastily deducing conclusions; she saw herself, in idea, at one moment, the object of his wild passion, and the next, neglected and ill-treated. She felt that *her affections* could never accommodate themselves to these vicissitudes;—and she prayed fervently, that the temptation, just now held out to her, might never again be repeated.

Lord Portargis had been gone so short a time that it was but just possible he could have reached Richmond, and dispatched a person from thence to London in the space, when a gentleman in a carriage, with post-horses, requested to see Lady Luxmore: he was shewn into the room where were her ladyship and Gertrude, on the latter of whom his eyes seemed vastly inclined to fasten themselves. He professed himself one of the surgeons attending the earl, and informed the countess that Lord Luxmore's life was in some danger, adding to his information, with very well-bred submission to her judgment, an urgent recommendation of her and Miss Aubrey's seeing him as soon as possible.

Gertrude was prone to human affections, and

not

not apt to be suspicious; but, in the present instance, she very innocently borrowed from an evil quality, to render useless a good one; and when the ambassador was gone, her feelings were as little moved as during his stay. Had she felt so alarming a warning, as at any other time she would have done, Lady Luxmore would have been spared the pains of acting as she ought; but there is a certain quantity of right to be done in the world:—it must be done; it matters not greatly by whom; but if one person will not do it, another must; and in the present instance, as Gertrude, who was the person in Lady Luxmore's family generally employed on irksome jobs, did not chuse to feel grieved, at what she thought exaggeration; Lady Luxmore was obliged, if it were only for the sake of opposing, to be in a prodigious tumult. Miss Aubrey had now *no feeling*; she was *much too learned* to concern herself for her fellow-creatures: it was *below her* to think of her best friends. In vain she tried to calm this perturbation, by persuasions that the danger was magnified, and that their presence, unless the message had come from the earl, could hardly be requisite. Lady Luxmore would have been culpable, in this instance, had she listened; and Gertrude was, though justifiably, wrong in her dissuasions; but the motive of the latter was the better; and the case added one to millions, which prove the 'Judge not of the gospel,' the injunction of Him who knew what was in the heart of man.

Let it not, however, be said or supposed, that
Lady

Lady Luxmore was too obstinate in doing right, to act without any discretion: she resolved, indeed, to go; but as the weather was warm, she postponed going till the evening; and, in the mean time, Gertrude had leisure to consider what she had best do. She could have betrayed the viscount, and have challenged praise, though she might not have obtained it; but this was like committing murder to save a pocket-handkerchief; and she deferred this violent measure for her last resource. Equal risk attended her going to Richmond, or remaining at home; and here she had no choice: she must do as she might be commanded; and happy would it have been, could she have slept till the word of command was given.

She dared not enquire. To have asked whether she was to go, might have broken the cloud which she fancied gathering: she had dreaded, sufficiently for every salutary purpose, the effect of the combination of her name with that of the countess, in the mention of the visit as expedient; but it had not been commented on, and she was thankful for the forbearance. She had enough beside to distract her; for whenever she fancied she was to be of the party, an apprehension came across her, that her going would lead Portargis to suppose she had changed her measures, and was ready for the agreeable excursion. But even this suggestion it was of no use to entertain; it could give no liberty of action.

An early dinner, in which the one would not, and the other could not, say more than was necessary,
cleared

cleared the way for the journey ; and it wanted a short quarter of an hour of the time for setting out, when the countess, in a way that Gertrude was perfectly accustomed to, asked ; ‘ And don’t you go, pray Miss ? ’—‘ I did not know your ladyship would chuse it. ’—‘ Chuse it ? why, when do I chuse to go alone ?—what were you named for, but to attend me, as is your place ? ’

‘ O ! ’ thought Gertrude, as she rose to prepare, ‘ now I see why my name did not give offence. ’

Better able to contend against solicitation, than prepared to expect misfortune, she, in approaching Richmond, could not be insensible to the salubrious change of air ; and though the peculiar feature of the road from Kew, might almost have led her to ask whether she could hope to meet the Thames again, yet, convinced it was to be seen at the end of the journey, she waited in a sort of patient impatience.

Attendants in abundance came out, on the arrival of the carriage at the hotel ; and to her ladyship’s question, ‘ How is Lord Luxmore ? ’ the forwardest replied, ‘ Very bad, indeed, I believe, my lady ; but I can’t justly say. ’

Gertrude’s confidence was shaken ; but finding the informant was the earl’s groom, she began to hope he was merely an accomplice in the viscount’s plot. A little farther conversation relieved this minor anxiety, by increasing her rising concern for the earl, as his situation was, on the testimony of all who could speak, very doubtful.

The matter seemed now too serious, even for the
countess

countess to face its circumstances; and when the carriage-door was opened, and she was alighting, she drew back, with a look that said she wished she had not ventured: she poised on the step, and again retreating, she desired 'that young woman,' pointing to Gertrude, might be shewn to the earl's chamber. 'Go,' said she, 'and see how matters are; and then I shall know what I have to do.'

The ladies again changed feelings; and Gertrude, in her turn, hesitated. 'Could not your ladyship speak to Lord Portargis?' said she. 'Lord Portargis has not been here since very early this morning,' was the reply, with the addition of 'he has not seen his lordship to-day,' and farther information that 'Lord Luxmore was much worse than when the viscount saw him last.'

Gertrude, even the dependent Gertrude, still hesitated. Lady Luxmore repeated her command; rebellion had proceeded only to the outrage of 'Me, ma'am?' when a repetition of her *congé de descendre* settled the business, and she followed a respectable female across the hall, mute, and disconcerted by the painful consciousness that she was acquiescing in a breach of that decorum which, not the world, its opinions or its modes, but those feelings which are implanted in us for the wisest and the kindest purposes, teach us to observe.

But absorbed as she was, she could not be insensible to the scene through which she was carried, as she ascended the wide staircase. What a contrast did the objects seen from the windows, form, not only with those which occupied her thoughts,

thoughts, but even with those on the side of the house by which she had entered!

Having gained the lobby near the earl's apartment, where she begged to remain till she could see some one of those about his person, her eye was caught by the river, on whose glassy surface were innumerable little boats, decked with white awnings and gay flags, and freighted with soft colors, and female loveliness; while from the shore resounded the harmony of an orchestra, and on the opposite meadow, and on the nearer bank, gay groupes of persons, seemingly ignorant of all the cares and vexations of life, were listening to the concert. It seemed an illusion addressed to the eye and the ear. On hearing a voice, she turned from the smiling scene; and her thoughts instantly recoiled to their first form of anxiety on the business of her awkward and distressing embassy. A woman, who bore the appearance of a nurse, crept towards her, and by looks, gestures, and expressions, ostentatiously cautious, gave her to understand that there was much to fear. Having answered questions, the good lady proceeded to ask them, and obtaining an affirmative to her queries, 'Pray ma'am? you'll excuse the liberty I take in axing: but are you the young lady as my lord calls Gertrude?'—she exprest the most vehement satisfaction in the discovery, and proceeded, almost by force of arms, to introduce her into the chamber. Painfully convinced now of her too confident incredulity, her heart sunk. Ignorant as she was of modes of thinking, she looked not;

as

as the world does, on that rotation of mortality which, to the great, brings in the same breath, condolence and congratulation: the scene before her was awful; and here her thoughts centered.

CHAPTER L.

A jealous boy. A helpless wife. An obliging landlady. A settled opinion. A sad mistake. A man of medicine. A desertion of duty. A substitution. Ideal happiness. An invalid and his attendant.

BEFORE she could collect herself, she was at the bed-side of one, who, whatever his faults or his follies, had, in the only instance where it was in his power, been spontaneously kind to her, and who therefore claimed, in addition to general compassion, peculiar gratitude. He was sensible to her presence and her feelings : her tears seemed to disable him from speaking ; and his short groans told her that his sufferings were great : he was striving to articulate his condescending thanks, when his son, with his whip in his hand, and a dog at his heels, in utter disbelief of any increased danger, came to see how his suffering parent was, ere he joined again, on the other side of the bridge, some honorable misses and right honorable ladies, who were waiting for the addition of ‘ that nice young man,’ Lord Portargis, to their equestrian party, and subsequent moon-light glide down the silver Thames.

The viscount’s astonishment was not feigned, when he saw Gertrude standing in tears, holding her handkerchief with both hands to her eyes, and
sobbing

sobbing aloud :—his second feeling was that of the most inconsiderate resentment; and without making the inquiries that were his errand, he quitted the room. The time, however, that it required to get half-way down the stairs, a little cooled him; and he stopt, unperceived, to watch the movements of his other parent, whom one of the females of the house was ushering into a room, with the usual observations on the weather, the dust, and the other accidents of a nine mile's journey to see a dying lord. To cross on his mother was, just then, worse to the viscount than to face Gertrude; and his present interests aiding the light of his reason, he turned to the window, at a loss to know which way to turn away, and began now to reflect that Gertrude could not deserve his anger; he acknowledged to himself that there was some puzzle in the business, and, sending his groom with an excuse to his party, he began to judge fairly; yet he liked not her being introduced into his father's room alone. Curiosity and anxiety dispelled his former pettishness, and preferring the best information, he again sought Gertrude.

In the mean time, Lady Luxmore, whom the respect with which she was treated, taught to behave respectably, had seated herself, with all the proper assumptions of her situation, in a parlor where she might wait, in the undisputed command of unexisting feelings, for the message which was to summon her to her lord. She was driven to a necessity she would have avoided, and from which perhaps she
would

would even now have excused herself, had she known it by experience ; but she had gone through the world thus far, ignorant of much of its calamity ; she had seen no one die, she had never seen extreme sickness. Saved, when young, by a squeamish helplessness, from that which is often the lot almost of infancy, a cut finger or a broken shin, only sent her to a distance : her father was a man of sound constitution and occupied mind ; his death was not preceded by illness ; and sick servants were always in garrets. The scene therefore that awaited her, was, even to her advanced age, new ; and she had time to prepare herself for it.

The mistress of the house had taken the place of her deputy in attending on the guest : and so pleasantly was the time beguiled in enquiries of ‘ And who lives in this house, and that house ? ’ and the common-place wonder at the changes produced in a fluctuating neighborhood, that her ladyship did not reckon minutes ; till at length, perhaps having no more questions at hand, she recollected her husband, and requested ‘ Mrs. What’s-your-name,’ to enquire if she might see Lord Luxmore, as ‘ she could not wait all night.’

‘ Yes, certainly, my lady ; but there’s a fine moon ; and it’s light all night now.’

The obliging landlady left the room, and went about her other affairs, while the countess resorted to the long narrow glass between the windows. Whatever was her opinion of herself, she turned away abruptly, and again wondered why ‘ Miss’ did not return.

Why she waited thus long, must be explained by a reference to the situation in which we left 'Miss.'

The earl was not without suspicions of his own danger ; and had, in the course of the now-closing day, in consequence of the hint of one, and notwithstanding the polite cheerings of the rest of his medical friends, settled his worldly affairs : he had talked of Gertrude, till his returning recollection told him that in wishing for her, he was wishing for his wife ; this had abated his desire to see her : she came now, therefore, when hope had expired ; and perhaps was the more welcome.

His opinion of her took its date from the journey to Luxmore, since which, indeed, some few years had elapsed ; but it was an opinion so founded, first on that of one for whom he had the highest respect, and then, on that sort of truth which neither time nor absence affects, that it was not to be shaken ; and as it amounted to no more than a discovery that she was a rational being, fairly endowed, and doing her duty to the best of her abilities, under *the encouragement* of opposing circumstances, whithersoever Lord Luxmore had wandered, with whatsoever persons he had associated, or how long soever he had ceased to see or to hear of Gatty Aubrey, she must still, whenever honored by his recollection, have presented herself to it, in the form of a young woman, deserving of esteem and regard, and perhaps claiming, from his family, something of kin to compassion and tenderness of affection. The period elapsed since

since they met, had not passed without improvement to her person and her deportment ; and if she had ever been an object of regard, she could at no time have lost her title to it.

Her tears, the irresistible gush of nature's first feeling ! had stopped ; and when Lord Portargis, who had relinquished his former feelings, almost unobserved by her again entered the room, though the traces of sorrow were on her cheeks, her countenance was fit to instruct his : he seemed as if ashamed of something wrong in his behavior, and desirous to make amends for it ; but the transient virtue was, in an instant, chased away, by her replying to his first words, with a request that he would have the goodness to go to Lady Luxmore, who might probably be waiting in the carriage—as his father, she presumed, would now wish to see her.

To the irritable apprehension of Portargis, this was a command to withdraw and quit the field : perverse indignation would have dictated obedience ; but his father, by a motion with his hand, stayed him, and then in a faint, but not very placid voice, requested that he might not be troubled, as he had no occasion to see any body.

‘ Am I to go and tell my mother so ? ’ asked the viscount, still alive to the pleasure of mischief.

‘ O ! no,’ said Gertrude, ‘ let *me* go to her.’

To utter another prohibition seemed beyond the earl's powers ; but he had so far freed his least-disabled hand, as to grasp her wrist ; and this the tenderness due to his imbecility, rendered a powerful

restraint on her movements; her distress was growing great, when the arrival of one of the medical gentlemen released her; and hurried into a promise not to quit the house without returning, she went to meet the expected displeasure of her patroness. To her, she represented the earl's situation, as she now indeed really believed it, desperate. She could truly say she thought his mind very much affected; and if there was any artifice in her narrative, it consisted in her endeavoring to persuade Lady Luxmore that the earl consulted her peace in begging her not, at present, to urge seeing him. In this, her ladyship readily acquiesced, with only a few hints of 'the non-importance of wives.'

To get back to London was the next solicitude; and as if fearful that the dispensation should be retracted, she was in haste to be gone. Gertrude's returning home with her was a matter unquestionably in 'the course of things,' and how to keep her promise of seeing his lordship again, was a consideration requiring more contrivance than she had at hand. But matters soon arranged themselves for her convenience; and a request from the gentleman whom she had left with the earl, to be allowed the honor of speaking to Lady Luxmore, freed her from this embarrassment.

This gentleman, who was an assistant left in waiting, and who knew only that in the absence of his principal he was to watch the earl of Luxmore, who had with him a son called Lord Portargis, and was now visited by a Lady Luxmore, untowardly, at first sight, imbibed a fatal error; and as,

even if the countess ever had been named in his hearing by father or son, it was merely by the style and title of Lady Luxmore, he knew not how she stood allied, he, trusting more the eyes in his head than those of his politeness, was so very absurd as to set down in his judgment a woman some years under threescore, and whose full age, ill health, and a fretful temper, had stamped on her forehead, for the mother of a man whose appearance, under every disadvantage, was younger than his time of life, but who was not yet forty. Still more desperately did this dealer in diagnostics err, when on entering the room, and paying the ‘debitam reverentiam’ to the countess, his eye passed on to her truly sorrowful dependent, whose countenance, disfigured by that part of her grief which she had indulged, and writhed by that which she strove to suppress, was turned from him, but whose figure explained to him the message he came to deliver.

‘I believe, Miss,’ said the man of medicine, going up ridiculously close to her back, ‘it is to you I must address myself.’

‘Pray, Sir, how do you find my lord?’ interrupted Lady Luxmore, as if vindicating her deprest consequence.

‘Why, on the whole my lady,’ replied he, stopping short in his walking up to Gertrude, ‘I think very sadly indeed. I am sorry to say my lady, my lord, your son I presume, has had a very bad fall, a very ugly fall, my lady, indeed, I give you my honor—indeed, it is impossible for any of us, or any man in the profession, to say what is the extent

extent of the mischief, but a few days will shew—it is not for his limbs that I fear, it is something worse that I apprehend—and in that case, you know, my lady, a few days may decide the business—there is, indeed, a most dreadful bruise on the left *patella*—the right *humerus* is a sad sufferer, and the *periosteum* of that *ulna* is greatly injured; in short, there is hardly a part that have not suffered more or less; but, after all, there's no saying—I think he's better—his pulse are better*.'

'For Heaven's sake,' uttered Lady Luxmore, indignant at the mistake under which she suffered, 'don't talk to me, Sir, of such things:—what do I know about them!'

'Beg pardon, my lady, indeed upon my honor—but I thought as so many ladies now study anatomy for their drawings and amusement—your ladyship perhaps does not give into the fashion of keeping a skeleton, by way of study.'

'Not I indeed, Sir; I thought you said you had something to say.'

* We are very sorry to say, we do not caricature in making our medical man sin against the rule that 'a verb agrees with its nominative case.' It is matter of unqualified wonder to hear the most sensible men—men who are scholars, and who have every medical recommendation, adopt this almost fashionable ignorance of making *pulse* plural. It is descanting on the horn-book to remind them that, as pulse has a plural of its own, it cannot be a plural in its singular form.—Do, we intreat you, good gentlemen, indulge us by saying, 'Your pulse is steadier, your pulse is weak,' as used to be the fashion; or we can never talk of 'the throbbing pulses of the brain.'

'O! yes,

‘ O! yes, my lady; to that young lady; I suppose she is the young lady, the Miss Aubrey, that his lordship talks of and wishes to set up to night.’

‘ Good God! Sir. Is my lord mad?’

‘ A little *comose* at times, my lady. There certainly can be no need of the young lady’s giving herself that trouble; for the nurse and my lord’s man will watch him, and *I* shall be in the house; but as we make it a general rule to indulge patients, *under particular circumstances*, in all their whims and fancies, it perhaps would be as well to indulge his lordship, if it can be done without great inconvenience. I will not say this *may* not be the last night—and, in that case you know ——. Come dear young lady, don’t cry so,’ continued he, patting Gertrude’s back, ‘think of my lord’s poor mother, my lady here. Well! my lady, what am I to say to my patient?’

‘ O! Sir, it must be just as you all please, for I see I’m nobody here:—mother indeed!’—replied the countess in no soft accents.

‘ Nobody?’ returned the medical man in a sharp tone of interrogation, which he softened before he ventured to proceed. ‘ I’m sure, my lady; I hope I didn’t say any thing disrespectful; I’m sure I didn’t mean it at least; I only meant to say, that as my lord had expressed a wish for the young lady’s setting up, and it may, as I say, God knows—I give you my honor—be the last night, I thought if your ladyship could manage it, it would be a satisfaction to your son and all parties. I dare say, if your ladyship approves it, your ladyship can be accom-

accommodated with a bed in the house. Will you give me leave to make enquiries?’

Lady Luxmore was at a loss: she was not very willing to disturb her own comforts by remaining from home during the night; yet having complained of being nobody, she saw that by abandoning Richmond and the earl, she should subscribe to her own degradation, and delegate to one whom she certainly did not wish to make vain, those cares and offices from which alone she could derive importance: she therefore suffered the bell to be rung, and the hostess to be summoned and questioned.

The apothecary interrogated; and the first questions produced answers that left Lady Luxmore no excuse for deserting her conjugal duty. Beds in abundance; and every room possessing peculiar charms and accommodations! But the operation of Lady Luxmore’s active mind had, even while she was listening, digested her plan; and she had decided that, as she could be called to nothing that was not disagreeable, it was best to get out of hearing. In leaving Gertrude, there was nothing to apprehend for herself, as she heard a will was made; nor could there be any anxiety for the girl, but that she might be fatigued and agonised, and feel deserted and wretched. Any scruples, incident to weak minds, with regard to delicacy or appearances, to do her justice, never occurred to her. As soon, therefore, as she had taken the refreshment of coffee, and her coachman chose to be ready,

ready, she prepared to return home, and to leave her *protégée* overwhelmed with the awfulness of her novel situation, and utterly at a loss to know how she was to get through the next twenty-four hours.

The mistress of the house, when this decision first reached her ears, prompted either by compassion, or chusing to take her orders from the principal, had introduced herself, with an apology for her intrusion, and a tender of all in her power for the young lady. She even offered to leave a person to sit up with her, or to share her vigil herself. Observing, that no provision of clothes could have been made for so sudden an emergency, she requested leave to furnish from her own wardrobe, what the young lady might want:—she would have put a small bed into Lord Luxmore's room; and, with the true feeling of woman for woman, she declared she could not bear the thought of her sitting up thus comfortless.

Gertrude tried to stop her tears, that she might express her acknowledgments; but the countess, who was then pacing backwards and forwards, till the floor resounded with the hammers of her heels, saved her the exertion, by returning thanks for what she felt as impertinence, and intimated, rather reprehendingly, that persons in Miss Aubrey's situation, could not 'be kept to do nothing:' she professed she saw 'no great matter in sitting up through one summer's night.' 'Miss Aubrey was strong enough for any thing;' and she was 'old enough to take care of herself.' 'She could
have

have some tea in the night, if she chose it, and go to bed as soon as people were about.'

The hostess retreated in respectful silence; and Lady Luxmore's carriage being announced, Gertrude attended her across the hall. Her feeling, when having watched the wheels round the first corner, she retreated from the door to avoid the gaze of some dragoon-officers, was not enviable.

She returned to the parlor where she had been before; and now looking on the Thames, scarcely conscious that she saw it, she began to strip her situation of all extraneous circumstance, and to consider what it was, and what it demanded.

She knew enough of the history of human nature, to be convinced, that few of its calamities could be new cases, and of her duty to perceive, that they were to be met with fortitude and composure. Had she, at this moment, been possessed of all the theory of the most refined sentiment, she would not have seen its utility; she would have fancied, that superfluous feelings tend to paralyze the mind by excessive excitation; and that their indulgence is too much connected with the retrograde inclination of self-love, to be highly laudable: she would have recollected what she had often heard from Mr. Sterling, that our feelings are the *wings*, not the *feet* of our duty; that the performance of it must have its source in the plain principle of obedience to the revealed will of God; and that a conscience kept watchful and tender on this point, will be, almost without the exception

exception of one example, sufficiently sympathetic to answer every just claim, even on its finest affections.

Having collected the forces of her mind, she felt composed, though unhappy; and losing all sense of her existence as a protected dependent, she assumed her new character of active responsibility.

Thus courageous, and made, by want of use, reluctant to giving trouble, she was going to the bar to request that the nurse might be called out of Lord Luxmore's room; but when, on opening the door, she saw loungers about, she felt her youth, her height, and her supposed awkwardness, and retreating, she rang the bell—not as bells in hotels are usually rung;—its one note was instantaneously answered.—It had the effect of Lord L——'s low voice in a crowded court—it was heard distinctly; and her message was conveyed immediately.

No sooner was his lordship aware that his wish had been obeyed, and his countess was gone, than he sent for Gertrude: his son was his ambassador; and it was at this moment very difficult for the viscount to tell himself, whether he was more pleased with her detention, or vexed that his father should be the person to detain her. But, in the present case, there was nought to be said. She was called to a very serious office; and perhaps her juvenile lover flattered himself, that it not only would not last long, but in its termination would remove all opposition, all difficulties, and all re-
gards

gards hostile to his passion, which painted every earthly gratification, as centered in the power to make dear Gertrude, what he supposed, happy, and the exhibiting her to the admiring world in Hyde-park, embarked with him in one of the most perfect of fashionable vehicles, while he should dispose the movements of the finest horses that could be procured, and share, as the prime source of her splendor, more than half the envy of those who looked up to them.—For this supreme satisfaction, who can wonder that he wished all obstacles removed?

In the domestic relations of the earl of Luxmore's family, there had occurred very little to tutor, to any good purposes, the hearts of a rising generation. Lord Portargis, in his father and mother, had seen nothing of the matrimonial character, but its disgusts, aversions, and inconveniences; yet, as he had little respect for one parent, and the most decided antipathy to the other, he took no lessons that could do him hurt, or adopted prejudices that could influence him to found his future practice in early example. He had, from infancy, loved Gertrude, as his first acquaintance; and her disposition towards him, had added a sentiment to his affection, which he was scarcely conscious that she deserved, or he felt. A vague idea of the superiority of her mind, and the consequent usefulness of her advice, which the *séjour* at Luxmore had greatly elevated, had inspired respect and deference for her. He considered her as barbarously treated by his mother,
and

and therefore gave her his pity ; and now, that in returning to her, he was somehow aware of the improvements attendant on youth not ill employed, there wanted as much opposition as he fancied he should meet from his father's regard to his family-interests,—as much prospect of tormenting his mother,—as much fear that any delay might be fatal to his hopes, and as much doubt as Gertrude's reserve kept awake,—to say nothing of the jealousy which the earl occasioned him, to fix on his heart a predilection, which the vehemence of his natural temper, rather curbed than cured by the thwarted discipline of his early years, and mis-directed by the subsequent policy of Abbé Bonfront, must, of necessity, make formidably passionate.

After a few minutes' intrusion on the earl's patience, while he was endeavoring to steel Gertrude's heart against the natural sympathy called out in the exercise of one of the most interesting of humane offices, he allowed her to go to the chamber, and take her seat by the bedside..

The young lord had no disguise in his composition : he had never pretended to virtues he had not ; nor did he design now to vary from his former ingenuousness. He had, before he was twelve years old, when his mother had accidentally affronted him, written a parody on ' *La Brebis et l'Agneau*' of Florian's ' *Bon Fils* ;' and he left it, without envy or emulation, as he conscientiously might do, the pious Firmin and Mesdames Marcelles, to exhibit, for the amusement of an
admiring

admiring audience, puerile nonsense, and the cant of sentiment. Sometimes, indeed, when he had found among the Eton groupes of embryo-statesmen, and bishops *in potentiâ*, one sensible to the goodness of a father who indulged what claimed indulgence and corrected what needed correction, he would wish that such a parent had been his ; but any serious thought, was, to Portargis, painful thought ; and any intrusions of this kind were generally dismissed with a consoling reflection, that it might ‘ all be as well in the end,’ and that, ‘ what suited one person, might not suit another.’

Lord Portargis must not then be involved in the slightest suspicions of hypocrisy, when he professed himself *determined* to sit up with his father through this night ; nor was his father very particularly concerned for the disturbance this would be to his son’s comfort, when he requested him to give up his intention, and go to bed. To get rid of each other civilly, was the sole integral view of each.—Lord Luxmore had no forethought beyond the night ;—his son postponed all thought till it should be past.

That authority predominated, which, in the present case, ought to have yielded. The viscount retired : at the earl’s request, the nurse and the valet took their station in a little room which communicated with the chambers of father and son ; and soon after Gertrude had placed herself where she thought she could be most useful and least disturbing, she was obliged to open the door and request silence : the attendants had forgotten their charge,

charge, and, hired to the offices of humanity, were content to discharge them by their lieutenant, and seek the delights of conversation.

Till all was still, the earl was so;—but, in too much pain to sleep, he seemed more inclined to talk, than Gertrude had expected; he was composed and perfectly collected, and began asking questions; one of which was, whether the countess had expressed any wish to see him. To this she, with the best intentions, replied, by stating Lady Luxmore's anxiety in its full proportion.

‘Ah! if that woman had been any thing but what she is!’

‘Had not your Lordship better try to sleep?’

‘I cannot sleep.—If I had married for any thing but money!’

‘Do not we sometimes,’ said Gertrude, ‘blame ourselves for doing that which was right at the time? We forget, perhaps, the motives which then induced us.’

‘O! no, no—what I did, never could be right.—O! Gertrude, it is now that I feel it—if you knew all, you would hate me.’

‘If *I did* know all, my lord, it would be impossible for me to form any fair judgment: and what must I be, if any error could make me so ungrateful, as to hate one who has been so very kind to me?’

There is an *imperial* sort of knowledge to be gained by the cultivation of a mind; and this Gertrude might hope, in time, if blessed with con-

tinued adversity, in some measure to attain; but there is also a *plebeian* sort of ready-change in the commerce of life, which neither the sages nor the muses can teach, and in which she was, by necessity, deficient. She spoke, not only as she thought, but as she understood herself the language she spoke; and she did not perceive, that, by expressing her gratitude, she was encouraging in the earl sentiments of tenderness: his deep sigh might have told her, if she had understood sighs, that his last hope had been pruning its wing, and that he had no ligament by which to detain the vagrant.

He wanted no monitor to bid him change the subject of his conversation: he felt it too powerful for him; and most willingly he turned to the contemplation of his corporal sufferings. As if he thought it necessary to impress conviction on his fading recollection, he replied, ‘I am certainly very bad—very bad, certainly.’

‘Not so ill as a few hours ago, my lord—you are better since morning, are you not?’

Again the spirit caught the flame;—and he repeated with energy,—‘O! no, no, no, indeed—yes certainly, I *feel* better,—but still, I fear, I am past all hope,—I ought to think so—O! how wretched it is!’

‘I would rather you would think yourself better. I persuade myself you are;—I hope and believe you are.’

‘Do you? my kind affectionate Gatty. I am so bruised and so shaken!’

A tear

A tear, which the watch-light illuminated, rolled down Gertrude's cheek; and the earl gave a deep groan, as if it had fallen in corroboration of that, which he wished not corroborated. 'I have,' pursued he, 'settled all my affairs; and that is some comfort to my mind, since it prevents the possibility of your being left destitute, or entirely dependent on Lady Luxmore's caprice. I do not know what she may do after my death. She may marry her footman next: whatever she does, I dare say it will be wrong; therefore I am happy that you will be, in some measure, safe.'

'O! I never wish to be safe by the death of my best friends,' replied she: 'I will bear any thing, if I can but see you recover, my lord.'

'It is not much,' said the earl, 'that I have to give you,—three-thousand pounds is the whole,—but this you will have; and I wish it were ten times as much; but in the way in which Lady Luxmore's property was settled to secure it against *me*, our younger children would have been no better provided for. You will find friends, better friends than we have been—O! do not weep so:—this is more painful to me than any thing I suffer;—I did not mean to make you weep; I would not afflict you, even for your advantage—I see I was wrong: I thought indeed I should comfort you.—O! how much I have to learn, and am only now beginning, when my lesson should be perfect!—O! Gertrude! why was not the woman I married, like you?—What a different man I
VOL. III I should

should have been! Since I have known you, I have been aware of the importance of a choice, that we make almost by lottery. It is easy to say, in marrying disagreeably and for interest, ‘If my home is unpleasant, there is the world;’—but how often have I felt the folly of this!—’tis one thing when the world *invites*, another when home *repels*; and surely, surely, Gertrude, though I, by no means, vindicate myself, a woman ought to consider what it is to drive a man out, perhaps angry with her, and disposed to think the want of virtue in those to whom he betakes himself, atoned for by agreeable manners. I dare say you know the life Lady Luxmore and I have led; it has not been softened to you, I will answer for it; she never spared me. Many, many a time, when we lived together, have I ordered my carriage and gone out, for very *ennui*, when, if I had had but a dog to play with at home, I should have been happy to have remained there; and I have always observed, that in going thus into company against my will, I have done things ten times more foolish, than when I have sought pleasure with a relish for it. But who could endure a home so ordered, and a mistress of it so untoward? Indolence, ill-humor, want of desire to please, varied only by pride and selfishness, were, in our best years, my lot;—the woman had no heart:—I had given way in many things—nay, I am sure I could have behaved well;—and I almost hope, that if I recover, I should, even now, do better than I have done.’

‘ It delights me,’ said Gertrude, ‘ to hear you say so :—pray God you may recover.’

The wish was too sincere to be uttered tepidly. In pronouncing it, she dropt from her chair on her knees, and covering her face with the bed-clothes, she, as earnestly as ever human creature prayed for self-preservation, prayed that these dawns of right feeling might assist in repelling the clouds of death. He, for whom she thus besought mercy, was deeply affected by the interest she took in his situation : he felt her indeed a comforter ; and while, with the hand he had at liberty, he would have tried to raise her from her supplicating posture, he sobbed aloud, and said, ‘ O ! Gertrude, I do not deserve so much kindness. Hear me, my sweet comforter !—But I cannot talk any more. I believe I ought to have something to take.—Will you call the woman, or my man, to give it me ?’

She did as she was desired : the medicine was taken ; and she would now, in hopes he might feel inclined to sleep, have retired ; but he would not permit it ; and when again adjusted in his cumbent posture, he resumed his interrupted reflections, and gave her, at intervals, an account of the progress of *his passion* for his countess, far better to have been suppressed. The round unvarnished tale, would not of itself have claimed much interest ; but the commentary, the self-reproach, the regret that mingled with the narrative, were afflicting. Serious thoughts, with more of prospect than of retrospect, followed ; and unless these were merely

'vows made in pain,' they indicated a disposition to a better mode of life, and a wish to know how best to set about the amendment.

That sense of right which asks no second question, and admits no palliation, made Gertrude, at the first glimpse of a reference to her judgment, point to a reconciliation with Lady Luxmore, and an amicable deportment with regard to her, as the basis of future comfort; and the present circumstances made her recollect and name Mr. Sydenham: but of any communication with him on the subject, he would not hear—'he could not, in the low state of his spirits, bear conversation; and she was, in his wretched suffering, the only company he could wish for.'—Perhaps even *she* would not have gained any toleration, had she not followed her gentle hint with a persuasive consideration of the state of Lady Luxmore's declining health.—A wonderful facilitation this proved!—Lord Luxmore promised every thing: and she flattered herself she had done some little good;—certainly, she thought, without much trouble. She had not suspicion enough in her temper, to make her ask why he was so decided on one point, and so comparatively facile on the other.

At day-break, the apothecary visited the earl's bruises, and Gertrude retired to the servants' waiting-room. Removed from the immediate call on her exertions, alone, and chilled by changing her posture, she felt her spirits give way, and throwing herself on a chair, she burst into tears.

Presently

Presently she heard footsteps in the farther room, the door of which opened, and Lord Portargis stood before her.

She was startled and alarmed; but disposed to conclude, that his uneasiness of mind would not suffer him to rest, she tried to speak calmly, and said something that indicated her sense of his filial attachment; but all this praise he immediately and very frankly disclaimed, by replying, that it was anxiety about *her*, that kept him out of his bed:—‘I cannot endure,’ said he, ‘this nonsensical sitting-up with my father—what can he want? he has people enough of his own.—Are not you going to bed now?’

‘O! no: I cannot go to bed.’

‘O! yes, you certainly might, if you would. Now, pray, don’t go into the room any more;—I’m sure he’s better without you.’

‘He does not think so; and indeed, Portargis, it would be cruel to leave him to the servants.—I will leave him, if you will take my place.—Shall I tell him you will come?—I dare say it would please him.’

‘O! no, no: I could not stand it.’

Very little more had passed, when Lord Luxmore’s valet came to summon Miss Aubrey to her post. Lord Portargis made her promise he should drive her to town as soon as she was dismissed; and then, distressing her by his violent farewell, he let her depart, and consented to go to bed.

‘I heard Portargis’s voice,’ said the earl, as she took her seat again;—‘what is he up for?’

‘He

‘He came to ask how your lordship was.’

‘Not exactly so, I fancy, Gatty; he wanted you to leave me and go to bed; did he not?’

‘Yes:—his good-nature and his want of knowing what is necessary in illness, made him injudicious—but it is very excusable in him.’

‘Why in *him*?’

‘Because—he is young.’

‘Is he not older than you?’

‘Only a few days, you know, my lord.’

‘Would it be excusable in *you*, to persuade him to leave me, if he were inclined to attend on me?’

‘O! no; but then the cases are widely different.’

‘They are, *indeed*,’ said the earl, emphatically—

‘Gertrude Aubrey, I see clearly what will happen. As soon as I am dead, you will be Portargis’s wife.’

‘I hope not, my lord.’

‘Why not?’

‘I shall offend you, if I tell you.’

‘No; you cannot:—tell me the truth.’

‘I should be afraid of his temper.’

‘O! his temper is not a bad one; he is not kind, indeed, to *me*; but when this has hurt me, I have been forced to think of my own errors. I have often suspected, that all Sydenham’s endeavors to make him wise, were counteracted by that puppy, Abbé Bonfront, and by his knowing what a fool he had for his father—God knows what is to become of him!—I wish I had left him with Sydenham, for he has been sadly idle while

ith

with me, and I am sure he has got no good at the Abbé's: but of this I can assure you, that if he has any heart, it is your's:—you have, I believe, fast hold on it.'

'I never tried to obtain it, my lord,' replied Gertrude, with a certain feeling of what she owed to herself.

'Forgive me, I meant no such insinuation—I believe you—but in not endeavoring, you were so much the more likely to obtain it. I do not wonder at Portargis's passion; but I do not like it: you are too near of an age to be happy: you, who know so little of the world, should marry a man who has seen it; and my son ought to marry for rank, to blot out the disgrace that his mother has brought into the family:—do you not think so?

'Certainly;—Lord Portargis is entitled to a woman of rank.'

A few more sentences which served to shew, that Gertrude had no ambition to wear a coronet, and was *in no particular haste* to be married, either answered the purposes of his lordship's conversation with her, or exhausted his powers. Perhaps his mind as well as his body, was easier; for he professed himself inclined to sleep; and she therefore resigned her situation to the nurse and the valet, on his earnest request that she would try to get repose.

CHAPTER LI.

A young man not at years of discretion.

SHE retired to the adjoining room, and having locked the door which communicated with the viscount's, she threw herself on the sofa, fell asleep, and dreamed that Lord Luxmore was dying: when disturbed by the trickling of her tears, her slumber was interrupted, and in the confusion of her harrassed and feverish intellects, she thought she felt a gentle breeze on her face. She waked more perfectly: it was broad day-light, and she saw Lord Portargis seated by her on the edge of the sofa, in the most affectionate mixed feeling of impatience for her waking, and unwillingness to wake her.

She concluded her dream a reality; and the first moment of recollection was a moment of alarm, which Portargis's countenance did not tend to diminish. It was evident, that he had neither had nor courted rest: the cloudy aspect of his mind, was enlightened by the expression of conflicting passions, and though all displeasure at a supposed preference of his father's comfort to *his* peace of mind, was lost in the avowed satisfaction of finding her where she was, she would, at this moment, have preferred his being angry. He
knew

knew she must now hear him ; and he exulted in the dilemma to which the danger of waking his father, who was happily asleep, reduced her. He had heard much that had passed ; and claiming praise for having suffered her to rest for more than two hours, he left her to infer, that an ostensible visit to the earl, had been the cause of his finding her where she was.

The more she heard, the more she was offended ; and as she rose, her tone, dignified even in a whisper, her countenance and her habitual influence, made his lordship feel most forcibly the terms in which she complained of the selfish interruption given to her short respite from fatigue and anxiety, and confessed herself astonished, that Lord Portargis, of whose friendship she thought better, should be the person to whom such a complaint, in any way, applied.

The inconsiderate are always in a state of astonishment. Not aware that, in doing what he thought proved the excess of his love, there could possibly be the smallest appearance of unkindness, he was wounded and intimidated by the information ; and in the most supplicating manner, he begged forgiveness and a patient hearing : the first was granted on his request : the latter she would gladly have denied ; but having no option that did not endanger his father, she was less firm in her refusal ; and his lordship, adopting the practice of all ardent minds, in taking the relaxation of opposition for her permission, pursued his purpose for engaging her in conversation.

‘ Will

‘ Will you only hear me, Gatty? Surely it is unjust—you would say so, yourself—to be angry, and refuse to hear an excuse!’

‘ I am not angry. The loss of my rest is not sufficient to make me *angry*. I only wonder, dear Portargis, at your want of feeling for me.’

‘ It is the excess of my feeling that makes me seem unkind, I assure you: I am so unhappy, that you would, I am sure, pity me, could you know all.’

‘ I do not wonder at it: your father’s situation is, I fear, very precarious.’

‘ Aye! always my father, my father!’

‘ Can any thing be so silly as your seeming offended with me for doing what I am ordered to do, and what I have no choice in doing? Consider my dependent situation; and beside, in such a time of awful anxiety, who would not do the little that is in their power?’

‘ I am not offended. To confess the truth I am only very jealous: I will not conceal it from you. I know how fond my father is of you; and I do not like it: ever since we went to Luxmore I have had good reason to be uneasy.’

‘ What can be so childish and so ridiculous?—I see no reason for uneasiness on any account, but the dangerous state your father is in; and that very danger ought to shew you your folly.—Would you have him hate me?—Are you afraid I should speak against you?—What can you have to fear?’

‘ Plainly then, that he will recover and marry
you;

you; if he does, you may depend on it I shall shoot myself.'

'Marry *me*? Why, do you forget your mother?'

'No, thank her. I shall never forget her; but she has nothing to do with my opinion; for, I'll be hanged if she lives a year. I should have been shocked to see any body else so altered; and now, indeed, I am very sorry for it. It is impossible she can live.'

'O! do not fancy so. Lady Luxmore is not young; and she now has so entirely given up all solicitude about appearance, that she looks much worse than she might.'

'Nonsense: but we will not dispute about that point. I should have no anxiety about my mother, if you would give me one promise.'

'Promise? of what?'

'Why, to be my wife at all events, as soon as you are dismissed from this confounded nursing my father, and we can get off.'

'I will engage myself to no such folly, and wickedness.'

'How can you call it folly and wickedness? What is the folly of it?'

'It would be folly in me, and I am sure still greater in you: O! Portargis, how you would repent it, and detest me, by the time you are of age! To marry your mother's indigent *protégée*: a girl left upon your mother's charity, under circumstances that I can hardly bear to recollect without agony!—a creature who has picked up an education, no one knows how, and who must disgrace you

you every moment.—If I hated you, Portargis, I should consent to your mad wish without another persuasion ; but as one who, from her heart and soul, wishes you well, one who is anxious for your happiness, and jealous for your estimation, I cannot, I will not listen to such a scheme for ruining yourself.’

‘ Do not you think, Gatty, I am old enough to know what will make me happy?’

‘ No ; no.’

‘ Well ! this I should not, indeed, have expected from *you*. But I know you think it right to refuse me ; it is very cruel ; and as for your arguments, they are not worth a straw :—as to your being my mother’s *protégée*, why, you are a clergyman’s daughter ; and Sydenham says your father was one of the best men in the world, and had very good connexions, and your mother was not a low person. I dare say, all that my mother has said against her is nothing but lies and spite ; and a million to one, if you had had some body to take care of your property, and my mother had not wanted a slave, you might have been brought up as you ought to have been.—And, as to your education, I’d thank you to shew me any girl that knows more than you do : You may be frightened, and fancy yourself very awkward, but you do not shew it ; and I am sure, at Luxmore, they all admired you for your elegant manners ; and I know that, when I compare you to other girls, even if they are beauties, I always like you best.’

‘ For shame, Portargis, how can you descend
to

to such flattery?—do you suppose I never dress myself at a glass?’

‘No, to be sure; but I am certain you do not know yourself, or how agreeable you are. You cannot see yourself speak; and it is then, I love you the most, even if you scold me.’

‘It needed all Gertrude’s present distress of mind to preserve her gravity in this original wooing, the *naïveté* of which might have proved more seducing than common artifice. She was obliged to shift her ground, and argue for herself, as her lover was so disposed to run all hazards where his own interests alone were implicated. She urged the reproach and disgrace she must incur.—‘I should feel like a thief,’ said she.

‘Then let us do the thing snug, and keep it a secret,’ replied the viscount. ‘Why, there is young Darenot has been married these two years to his mother’s house-maid, and the family know not a syllable of it; and there’s Lord Anteflood’s eldest son has absolutely married a girl out of a shop in Pall-mall; his father would certainly shoot him if he knew it; but he fancies he only keeps her; and that’s very well, and it’s all safe.’

‘And pray, Portargis, would you have me copy the one or the other of these bright examples?—Would you have me skulk like the house-maid, or be accounted like the shop-girl?’

‘No, no; I only say this to shew it may be done. At least, nobody needs know any thing till it is all over, and we are safe; and then let them say what they will; why should you care? My
mother

mother can't live long to scold. I shall break it to my father; and he cannot say much: I tell you I can get money, till I am of age; and I protest I had rather live on bread and cheese in a cottage, so I have but my horse and my gun, and a couple of pointers, than be as miserable as I am about you, if my father would give me all he has. Beside, this can't last for ever; and even if they *do* plague us for a little while, I can keep you out of the way; and we shall be happy at last. In coming here from Windsor, I saw the most beautiful little snug place in the world, that would just do for us—out of the high road—a little white house in the middle of a little garden of roses and carnations: my father stopt there to see a man and his wife: I can't tell who they were; but I should guess *she* had been an old acquaintance: they are going out of it, and we might have it nicely furnished for a trifle; and there was a little book-room so beautifully fitted up!—I am sure it was my father's taste.'

'And can you suppose, if you are right, that I would be the next inhabitant of such a house?'

'O! it had such tasty curtains; and it was so green, and so cool, and so retired!'

'Retired!—it never could be retired enough for one whose conduct would not bear the light.'

'Well, you shall live where you will, and do entirely as you please; only consent. A week will take us into the north, and bring us back; and I will stay till my father is just out of danger. I have settled it all in my own mind, and will get every thing

thing ready. Chamborde, I am sure, will travel with us ; and he has a sister that can attend you. I have consulted a friend, and got the whole route from him.'

'I hope you have not used my name.'

'I did, upon my ————. I beg your pardon, dear Gatty, a thousand times, if it was wrong ; but I could not help it: he would not give me his advice, unless I would assure him it was for a respectable woman, so I thought it the shortest way to say it was for you ; but you need not be at all afraid: he is a very honorable fellow, I give you my word. I have known him a long time intimately: he has promised not to mention it to any living soul: and you may trust him.'

'Does he know me?'

'No, not at all ; but he admires you very much on my description. What do you say, Gatty?—Why don't you speak?—Why are you going to cry—O ! pray, pray speak.'

'I have almost lost all power,' she replied, struggling to free herself from her very painful feelings.

'I am hurt beyond all expression. I am degraded below even my native humiliation. I have been, I see, made the theme of discourse to two school-boys; and for such a paltry purpose as the contrivance of a stratagem ; a deception !'

'How can you call it paltry?' said the viscount, striving to appease her: 'you must forgive me:—I am sure any body would say I was right, if they did but know all the cause I have to be anxious. Pray, forgive me.'

'I can.

‘ I can see nothing, Lord Portargis, that is entitled to forgiveness, but your inexperience : yet surely you ought to know better, even now ; and of this you may be assured.—’

‘ O ! assure me of nothing but your consent.— I know what you are going to say by your looks : how strange it is that I should love you so, when, I am afraid of every word you will say ! Do not call me Lord Portargis, and turn so coldly from me. Say you will do what I wish ; that you will, at least, think of it.’

‘ Never while what you wish is dishonorable in you and ungrateful in me. I will not give it a thought, but to detest it.’

‘ Nay, I deny that it is dishonorable ; it is what is done, every day, by the most honorable people in cases of necessity ; and I cannot say I see any harm in it, I protest ; and as to any ingratitude on your part, I am sure every body who knows the scandalous manner in which you have been treated by my mother, must acquit you.’

‘ But what has your father done to justify me ? has he not been as kind as possible ?’

‘ Aye, there ! always my father. I do not think, Gatty, you would refuse my father as you do me, if he were to say what I have said.’

‘ Base, base Lord Portargis !—You will make me forget the respect due to you. I should, I hope, refuse any body who prompted me to wrong my benefactors. O ! how could I look them in the face after having trepanned their son ?—And in this instance ——.’

‘ Nay,

‘Nay, nay; don’t talk so.’

‘I insist on being heard, Portargis; or I will, even if I disturb your father, quit you.’

‘Well, well! I will hear you: only do not expect me to give up.’

‘As you please: only be aware that I am as firm as you can be, in the resolution I have taken.’

‘And what is that resolution?’

‘Never in my early years to do any thing that shall embitter my old age. I think I could bear any thing but self-reproach.’

‘Do you not think you should reproach yourself if you did any thing that made me shoot myself?’

‘Certainly, if what I did was, in itself, not right; but if I had acted to the best of my judgment, I must leave the event to Providence; and however I might grieve for any disastrous consequences, I could not reproach myself. But in the present case, I am not apprehensive. You have always had good nature enough to bear with me; and I am sure you will, when you think coolly, consider your character, and be convinced that in injuring it, you destroy your own happiness more completely than by a submission to circumstances.’

The innocent artifice of piquing the viscount, on the point of reputation, had its effect; and he seemed determined, by a patient hearing, to make good her undertaking for him.

She began by referring, in a manner calculated to rouse the most laudable of his feelings, to the habits of their early friendship; their steady

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attachment, their disinterestedness, and the uniform preference of each other's gratification to any selfish pleasure; and she closed this part of her persuasive but simple eloquence, with something like an indignant regret that the twenty-first year of their age, now near its close, should find them less meritorious in these generous sentiments than they had been in their childhood. The viscount interrupted her only by expressions of acquiescence and conviction; and she proceeded to own to him the substantial character of her regard for him, which she felt convinced, and endeavored to convince him, nothing but his own choice of error could disturb.

Promises the most unhesitating, and self-undertaking the most confident, allowed her to pause before she came to a subject she wished to make him weigh, and which her unsophisticated, her ever-present and never-fading sense of right, made her anxious to recommend, in the most conciliating manner, to his attention.

She told him that his father's peace of mind was injured by the retrospect of those errors, which it became neither his son, nor the dependent of his family, to comment on, but she conceived it a duty of the highest importance in both of them, to contribute all in their power to its restoration; the first step, and that which must be immediately thought on, was the reconciliation of Lord and Lady Luxmore, which she hoped might be followed, if he should recover, by their living together on terms of decorum and good will. If he did not, it was still a
more

more sacred duty: the event must not be the test of their decision; every effort must instantly be made to secure his comfort in quitting the world. If his life was, as she hoped it might be, prolonged; it would render it more respectable and more consonant to moral rectitude, to be at peace with his wife, who, whatever was the prejudice against her, or its foundation, had certainly, even by his own account, rescued him from great difficulties by accepting him.

It was not very probable that a young man—an age off years of discretion in mind, and who had never fancied half as much cause to esteem, or even to pity his father, as to hate and despise his mother, should immediately, on the suggestion, feel a lively interest in the peace of mind; or the respectability of the one or the other.

His lordship had adopted that ‘quid pro quo’ system of commutative justice, which makes the virtue of one contracting party, depend on that of the other. That his parents were ‘no parents to him,’ was his expression, and, at the same time, his reason why he was to be ‘no son to them:’ he saw not that the intrinsic worth of every good deed is increased by the failure of this world’s paltry encouragements; that, if those with whom we are connected by the ties of humanity, fail in their performances, we add to our merits all those which they discard, or that the filial duty, which is respected as strictly just, when exercised towards an exemplary parent, becomes worthy the contem-

plation of angels, when less claimed. Could it, indeed, be expected, that one who reasoned by a commentary of his own on the commandments, and who would not believe that observation of experience, which shews that, even now, length of days and signal prosperity accompany innumerable instances of duty to parents, should be persuaded by a tutor, whose advice he felt doomed to hear, that there results from the exercise of this duty, a peace, a comfort which the world cannot give? that in years of adult enjoyment, the recollection heightens every sense of the value of liberty? and that the delight, tasted in a summer-evening of exquisite beauty, on Windsor's lovely terrace, has owed much to the soliloquy, 'I feel that I have a right to the pleasure that surrounds me: I have done my duty, to the best of my imperfect powers, to my parents: I quitted them not, even for such a gratification as this!—O! could, O! *would* all but strive for this satisfaction!—may it ever be present with the many who deserve it *!'

Mr.

* Most grievous are the shackles imposed on us by the delicacy that must not be infringed with regard to the living. Freed from these, we would, with delight, enumerate a few of the many instances we could adduce of the blessing of God on the virtue we here recommend. We would not recount gigantic feats of virtue: these are comparatively easy of performance, and very consistent with systematic immorality: but we would tell of Lieutenant Colonel H——, whom, in our infancy, we recollect as an example of *regularly affectionate* deportment to a mother by no means particularly interesting, of Mrs. P——— who, in the high
festivity

Mr. Sydenham had seen the necessity of supplying, in the young viscount's mind, the sad deficiency which his ignorance of parental care had caused, nor had he left, in any instance, uncombated, the prejudices imbibed in the basement-story and equestrian appendages of the mansion of Luxmore; but the perpetual counteraction, either of his mother's temper or his father's correspondence, and subsequently the liberal maxims of the abbé, undid all he could do; and Lord Viscount Portargis was turned loose on the world, as little encumbered as even *he* could wish, with the prepossessions and weakness of domestic association; in short, excepting Gatty Aubrey, and a Newfoundland dog, lately taken into high favor, it might be questioned, whether there was any thing in the world that he could be said to love, though perhaps he had been a large *professor* on the continent.

The negative indocility of a mind, thus formed by nature or ruined by neglect, had been turned into

festivity of youthful pleasure, never relaxed the solicitous attention due to a parent's infirmity—of our proved friend Charlotte, who, with the keenest enjoyment of the world's pleasures, finds the greatest gratification in renouncing all for a mother who certainly does not *flatter* her—and of the friend of our cradle, the —— of ——, who graced his ball-room with his homely parents, and led rank and royalty up to pay respect to his father and mother.

In every instance, where situation is decided with regard to these persons, these gems of society! their success in this world—paltry as is the consideration!—must be adduced as in favor of their practice.

spontaneous election and stiff perseverance by the counsels of the valuable friend whose opinion he had quoted to Gertrude as sanctioning his proposal, and who was much more at home in the epics of Bond-street and the Anthologia of Hyde Park, than in the 'Integer vitæ' of Horace: they had met in the recent visit at Lord ——'s, and had renewed the intimacy that had commenced at Abbé Bonfront's; and having bestowed some pains in recommending himself to the good opinion of the earl, and the friendship of his son, the young man had become a soporific to the uneasiness of the former, and a stimulus to the irritability of the other. He had heard the father's complaints of the son's prominent qualities, and had persuaded him that they were the chagrins of every day of every human creature's existence; he had listened to the son's fretful sensations of galling dependence, and had excited him, not to 'end them, by opposing' openly, but by a dexterous pursuance of his own inclination.

From the one and the other, he had learnt nearly all they had to tell; and as he was himself the natural son of a retail-dealer in politics, who kept him, at twenty-four years of age, in tutelage, whose ability to leave him any thing must depend on changes of administration, and whose will to do it was still more dubious, he took care to nurse the new-formed friendship, and looked forward with hope and confidence to the time when 'that fine fellow,' his friend Portargis, should have a seat in the upper house from his father, and an ample fortune from
his

his mother, and consequently a borough in the lower house, and a few thousands in his purse, wherewith to repay the eminent services, and leading advice of his friend Sylvanus Reynardson.

As it appeared to this young man that nothing *of his own interest* was risked by encouraging Lord Portargis to think, as he called it, ‘rationally and without prejudice,’ of the conduct of his parents—who were, as this enlightened guardian said, even had they been the best parents in the world, ‘entitled to nothing beyond perfect strangers;’ he was not backward in his philosophic endeavors to keep alive that separating flame which the natural good humor of Portargis, and the indulgent temper of the earl, might have extinguished; and, as jealousy was a very useful fan, he with it nursed that other flame which, he perceived, the virtues, the endowments, and the hardships of ‘one Gertrude Aubrey,’ a Dulcinea del Toboso, he doubted not, of the young man’s imagination—had seated in the bosom of the viscount. It was not, indeed, his decided intention to lead the son into disobedience to his father: he knew too well how the affairs of the house of Luxmore were circumstanced; and he stood ready, at this moment, to accelerate or bar the private marriage of his rash disciple and unconscious tool. Should the earl’s case, of which he had a daily report, become really desperate, he meant to advise, and go through with ‘the Clandestine Marriage,’ in which his perfect and professed knowledge of women told him this said Gertrude Aubrey must instantly

stantly concur, as the very best service by which he could bind the new earl to his interests. But should the father's recovery become to any satisfactory degree certain, he designed by communicating the son's intentions in time, to prevent them, and expose the parties, as a medium by which to attach to himself the elder parts of the family.

Knowing nothing of Gertrude but from the rhapsodies of Portargis, and therefore concluding that she resembled the girls of his acquaintance, he would have felt no compunction in occasioning any evil of which she might be the victim: he was ready, in the one case, to compliment his friend on the discernment of his heart, and to console the misgivings of inferior worth which he supposed she must feel in the approach of her elevation, or to ridicule the degrading choice and crush the conceited presumption.

If it be proverbially discreet to have two strings to one bow, surely the conduct of this child of foresight was eminently commendable; and nothing was wanting, but that Gertrude should have been dazzled by the honors and advantages which floated before her, to have confirmed Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson in his own high ideas of his consummate 'knowledge of life'—a science not at all dependent on the enlarged, the experienced, the deduced study of human nature.

No allowance was made, in his calculations, for the possibility that the she-puppet he meant to play, might not fit his wires: he had adapted them to what indeed he supposed the every-day make of she-puppets:

she-puppets: he had painted her to himself, without any difficulty; for though the indistinct un-outlined glare of Portargis's description, precluded all accuracy of tracing, yet he could infer, from common-place admiration, that she was a common-place being; and she stood before his imagination, as tall, slender, accomplished, *attitudinized*, with strong contrasts of countenance and complexion, and, on the whole, as 'a very nice girl indeed:'—her mind, he supposed, formed on books and fashions, therefore 'sentimental and refined:'—he could have ventured, from his previous acquaintance with 'a large lot' of fortune-making ladies, to describe even the library on which she had been tutored into so charming a creature as Portargis described her; and, though he had heard him with 'grains of allowance' on the subject of her attainments, he did not doubt that she might have learnt French verbs with great celerity, that she could recite Collins's 'Ode on the Passions,' that she read Metastasio, played the harp, sung 'Son regina,' and danced reels: she might likewise draw Madonnas, and take sketches; but of plain sense, an active mind, native principles of rectitude supported by religion, dignity of morals, and such primitive endowments, made adaptable to the world by the cultivation of intellect, Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson knew as little as if he had conversed, all his life, with the chambermaids of a hotel.

Could Gertrude's ignorance have been made to conceive her own profound inferiority, how must she have deprecated all possibility of an introduction

tion to this censor! how dreaded would have been the moment which should put it in his power to inform his friend that the object of his passion was not 'accomplished,' not 'elegant,' not 'refined!' In vain would it have been urged that she possessed gold where others boasted only gilding—that she had been fed with the wholesome nutriment of a rich soil, instead of *brodo lungo* purchased at the soup-shops of juvenile literature—that she had *by heart* the commandment 'Thou shalt not covet,' and the precept which forbade her to do that which she should reluctantly suffer. It would have been no apology for the want of a disposition to be duped, had she proved ever so clearly that nothing in itself wrong could be right—that all sophistry was lying of some shade or other, or that 'sinful paths to sure destruction lead.' Nothing could have excused the shocking confidence of deciding for herself as to what was fit or right for *her*; nor could she have re-instated herself in the favor of one so situated and so enlightened, had he once heard her, as she was, poor girl! too apt to do, stop encomiums on vice, or severity against folly, by hinting that to praise vice was vicious, and to censure folly foolish.

But such was her mind, and such were its feelings; and it was, therefore, with a judgment thoroughly unclouded, that she refused all acquiescence in Lord Portargis's private plan.

Perhaps this integrity, and the firmness with which it was supported, might have broken off the conversation, if not the friendship of the parties, had

had not her view of making the viscount's opinion of her, serviceable to the family-interests, rendered her cautious of giving him offence. She represented the respectable ascendancy which the exercise, and, still more, the success of any good offices between his parents, would give him in their estimation, and how little probable it was that, if they felt indebted to him for improved comfort, they should thwart him in any thing on which his really depended.

The phosphoric imagination of the young man seized the idea with avidity, and he considered himself as only sent by another, though rather a more circuitous road, to the temple of happiness.—The way was better, he could not but confess; and as he was too hasty and too much dazzled to see hill or dale, quags or quicksands in his path, he fancied his father and mother already transformed into friends, and himself enjoying the honor of the reconciliation, and the indulgence of all his wishes.

He might now, he thought, look forward, not only to the easy possession of Gatty, but of 'six greys,' equal in all the attributes of horse-flesh, to those with which Sir Philip Lorimer, the contempt of the proud, but the envy of the vain, had astonished the world: he had some notion likewise of buying a Titian, which he had been assured would establish, for ever, the fame of any nobleman who should purchase it of the importer, and who could build a gallery, one end of which it might occupy.

But

But as she would not hear of the greys, and was so wicked as to laugh at the notion of building a gallery for the Titian, he was obliged, whatsoever were his ardent hopes, to keep them to himself.

On one point she, without hesitation, gave him every satisfaction in her power: she assured him he had nothing to fear, even if his father lived, and his mother should, as was not very likely, be soon taken from them. She was, in her own mind, persuaded that the earl felt for her only the kindness of a parent who would have been pleased with a daughter, and the tenderness of a well-bred man towards a helpless destitute girl, whose humble situation dispensed with the observances of ceremony. Her heart, she confessed, would never suffer her to be or to appear ungrateful; but time would prove that any suspicion that he had hinted, was equally injurious to his father and to her.

Having brought her impatient auditor to concur in her opinion, or at least, to believe what she so solemnly asserted, she ventured to urge the pressing necessity of immediately acting on the plan of reconciliation: she was scarcely more aware of it than he; or at least, as all that Lord Portargis undertook must be done with rapidity, or it would never be attempted, he appeared as much impelled as herself. The only difference between them in their impulses, was that Gertrude was inclined to run because the business required it, the viscount because he could never stop. Of the two heads,
her's

her's was rather the least at a loss in the means to be devised ; and she proposed that, before she set off for town, she should see Lord Luxmore, and discover what his disposition was on this subject. She hoped to bring him to wish to see the countess, in which case she thought she could prevail on her to return with her in the evening, and to wait the event of her husband's misfortune ; and to this simple beginning, the viscount, who could much more readily have detailed the plan of Scottish flight than contrived that of bringing his mother from London to Richmond, acceded, having, as he confessed, ' nothing better to propose.'

This treaty for the union of forces, which at present wore the aspect of leaving all the labor to one of the parties, was scarcely concluded when the earl waked : his sleep had been so profound as to leave no doubt that it was procured by narcotics. Portargis had, by Gertrude's earnest desire, been many times to look at him, and she, desirous that those about him should have nothing to *suppose*, had been equally vigilant : the door between the rooms had been left a few inches open ; and it had required a most fatiguing exertion on her part, and all her control over Portargis, to conduct their dialogue on a subject so interesting, under the sibilations of a whisper. That her hearer would shut the door, or disturb his father, was a fear that added to her embarrassment : but she knew what was due to herself, and she had, somewhere or other, picked up a notion,

tion, perhaps from the unbowing ethics of Mrs. Anne Britton, that though innocent persons may be pitiably rendered objects of calumny or suspicion, it does not ordinarily occur where prudence has been fairly employed.

CHAPTER LII.

A persevering girl.

THE state of Lord Luxmore's mind and nerves, proved the compulsion under which he had slept: she heard him impetuously command her attendance, and add to his message the alarming information, that he was dying, and would have no one present with him but her. Portargis ran out at the opposite door, beckoning the valet; the nurse crept away; and Gertrude had no choice but to go forward, or desert her duty.

Harrassed by fatigue, and by the rapidity with which she had been snatched from one set of feelings to another, she felt her animal spirits for a moment give way, under the exertion she was called to: she could only raise her hands and eyes, where hands and eyes are never raised in vain, and then kneeling down and hiding her face, she was able to check the gush that would, by betraying her fears, have disturbed him, who, in the greatest degree, caused them.

He begged her to sit by him, and to forgive the trouble and the pain he gave her: not aware that he had slept, he told her her absence, so far from
tending

tending to his repose, had disturbed him, and that he was now indeed convinced that he had not many hours to live.

‘It may be laudanum,’ thought she: ‘I remember the misery it once occasioned me—I hope it is so—but should I be mistaken!—for what do I know of signs of death? I had better give way to his idea.’

The earl paused, as if purposely to be contradicted: but she only interposed a gentle exhortation to submission.

‘What then? *you* give me up!—then I must die.—Well! perhaps it is as well! I shall be out of every body’s way: I’m afraid Portargis wishes me gone—’tis hard from one’s own son; and yet—’

This painful suspicion she could safely try to remove; she assured him he was unjust, and mentioned a plan for his comfort; which his son and she had been arranging.

‘What; what is it?’

‘Your seeing poor Lady Luxmore.’

‘Nay then, I am sure *he* thinks I shall die.’

‘He can form no opinion.’

‘Well! what is your’s, my Gatty?’

‘I am no more able to judge than Lord Portargis: but I should hope your lordship is not in momentary danger;—in all situations, we ought to be prepared for the worst.’

‘Then *you* think there *is* a chance.’

‘Certainly, there must be more than *a chance*
for

for those who are in the hands of a kind Providence.

‘ That is very amiably said, my child ; but I fear I have little to do with that ; I have thought so very little on Providence, that I cannot expect Providence to think much on me.’

‘ But surely we should, when we have leisure, and are, not only freed from the bustle of the world, but compelled to suffer the evils of life ;—surely then, my lord, is the time to think on Providence. Providence does not give us up, when we give ourselves up.’

‘ Very true—but I think I feel better again ; and I would rather think on something to cheer me.’

‘ Gertrude, accustomed in her early years, and in the innocent superstition of unguided piety, to mention in her infant prayers, all the trifles she felt connected with her little comfort,—who, if Portargis had a cough, had prayed that he might not ‘ have a pain in his left side, and,’ as his mother predicted, ‘ go into a consumption, and be sent too late to the Hot-wells ;’—who, if she could not remember what she got by heart, prayed that she might have such a memory given her, as Mr. ——— had been said to possess, who, she was told, could remember down to a deuce at whist ;—Gertrude, who, in one instance, when accused of purloining two lottery-tickets, the property of her patroness, had, in her evening orisons, supplicated that numbers 647 and 1408 might be forth-coming next day ;—Gertrude thus early pious and dependent, even now, when she had

learned, long since, to bound her specifications by the divine prototype vouchsafed us, had no idea that it was possible to seek any thing more cheering than the comforts of religion. She feared she was wrong in speaking coolly to such apathy; yet unwilling to risk wounding one so severely afflicted, she replied only, 'I must leave you, my lord, if you talk so.'

'Why?' asked the earl, at a loss to see the fault for which the punishment was threatened.

'Because,' she replied, 'I can think nothing so cheering in sickness, or distress of any kind, as the being allowed to pray to our Maker.'

'Ah, ah! it may suit *you*;—I fancy you are low-spirited.'

'It may suit me peculiarly,' she replied, 'because in my natural state of dependence, I have nothing else to rely on; but yet I should suppose, as we are all in some measure dependent, the liberty of being allowed to ask for what we want, and the hope of receiving it, must be universally a comfort.'

'And do you really find it a comfort?'

'O! my lord, how should I have borne, even the small share of misfortune that has been my lot, without it? Ought I not to ascribe it to the good Providence of God, that I am not a beggar?'

'True: but Lady Luxmore would always take care of that; besides, you were not old enough, when she took you, to pray against that.'

‘ Ah! my lord, you must, I fear, have felt what I have felt;—you must feel disgraced, poor, destitute;—you must be an indigent unprotected girl, to know what it is to have One Being in the universe to resort to, and that One, the wisest and the best, who ‘ never slumbers, never sleeps;’ ‘ whose eyes are over all his works,’ and who has told us, that we are of more value than those creatures who yet share his Almighty protection.’

‘ I wish, my child, I had been taught so.’

‘ I was never *taught*, my lord; I was told that there was a Being who made, and who governs the world, and that, as he would give us what we needed, we were to pray to him.’

‘ But how could you learn to frame your mind to pray to him?’

‘ How did I learn to eat when hungry, or to sleep when weary? or to clamor for what I wanted as a child? Surely the voice of intreaty is the voice of nature! and when we are made to suffer, it cannot be necessary to be *taught*, to ask for an abatement of our sufferings.’

‘ True: there is reason in what you say; but when one has been out of the habit of it, or rather never in it, it must be very hard to learn.’

‘ Is it at all difficult, my lord, let me ask, for you to beg me, as you condescend to do, to comfort you?—Did you find it at all repugnant to your feelings, when you were thrown from your horse, to beg some one to release you from his power of kicking you to death?’

‘No, no;—but the cases do not apply.—What right have I to ask for relief?—where—O! I cannot think of it.—I wish I had something to cheer me.—I wonder when the medical men will be here again.’

Gertrude felt that she must not give way. ‘I understand,’ said she, ‘my lord, what you mean; and certainly I should hope you feel that which should encourage, instead of dejecting you. I remember a sermon I read some time ago to Mr. Sterling, which stated the condition of such persons as had unhappily lived long negligent of the practice of religious duties, as much more favorable to a sincere and hearty reformation, than that of those who had never omitted the external forms, but who yet had been insensible to all beyond them; and a good comparison, as it appeared to me, concluded the argument. It was asked, which of two persons, both being in ill health, we should think the more likely to recover by medicine, the man who had, by an irregular use of drugs, rendered his constitution dead to their effects, or the man who having, till now, refused medicine, was convinced of his absurd obstinacy, and, resorting to it, left it to act in full force on the disease it had to combat.’

‘There is good sense in the comparison, I can see; and it is consoling to such unfortunate beings as myself; for I have never taken much medicine of any kind; and they may now give me as much as they will;—I fear I need it.’

Gertrude

Gertrude was at a fault: she saw the misapplication, but she dared not correct it;—she paused, not knowing how again to open the subject.—His lordship relieved her by saying, ‘Well, dear Gertrude, advise me, and I will do what I can.’

‘In what way, my lord, can I advise you?’

‘Why, as to what I ought to do, and to think, I suppose.’

‘Had you not better see some person of more experience and authority?—Mr. Sydenham.’

‘O! now then, I am sure I *must* die!—You have signed my death-warrant,—You give me over now, I am convinced.’

‘No indeed, I do not; it would be most cruel and most ignorant presumption in me. Perhaps it is taking too much on me, even to say what I wish.’

‘No, tell me, tell me, I will hear it.’

‘I am, I confess, very anxious, that your lordship should think seriously, because I am sure then you will act uprightly. I wish I could persuade—’

‘Tell me what you wish, and I will do it.’

‘You are very good.—May I speak?’

‘Freely: the more freely, the more I shall love you: nobody hears you: I will give you any promise, or enter into any engagement, if you think it likely I should live.—I am sure nothing could make me so happy.’

It was of no importance that the parties perfectly misunderstood each other at this instant. His lordship thought she was going to ask for the
reversion

reversion of the title of countess; and she thought, he was promising to put in his claim for that of a Christian. On this mistake she founded her reply: 'I will then tell you what, in your lordship's place, I should do.'——'Do so.'

'I should first recommend myself seriously to Heaven, begging fervently to have my mind put into a proper disposition for the event of life or death.'——'I will.'

'You said, I think, my lord, you had arranged all matters of business.'——'Yes; I have left you three thousand pounds, I wish it were more: but Lady Luxmore's money is so tied up——'

'O! do not talk of money or me. I only wished to know your mind was freed from all this disturbing care.'——'Well then! it is all done.'

'The next thing I should do, would be to send to Lady Luxmore, requesting to see her.'

'No, no—never, never;—that woman would, at such a time as this, drive me to despair. I see now for what I sacrificed every power of doing well. What comfort is she to me? and for what did I do it? what can her money do now for me?'

'But still, my lord, indeed you should see her.'

'No, no, no:—it is not necessary.—Do not disturb me, for God's sake, with that woman just now; let me, if I *am* to go out of the world, go in peace: the very thought of her, heightens my fever. In the hope of mending your situation, I meant to have paid her what little attention I could; but now, that is all over—pray, pray, never name her.'

'I am

‘ I am persuaded,’ said Gertrude, ‘ that it has been the interest or the amusement of some one to widen the breach between you and Lady Luxmore ; and I have heard it remarked, that wherever families disagree, they put themselves in the power of all those who would profit by their disagreement.’

‘ I believe you are very right ; but I never thought of this before.’

‘ Lady Luxmore, I dare say, my lord, has been represented to you very unfavorably : I think you would now find her very much altered ; and after all, what has mere foible to do at such a time as this ? She may have been often wrong ; and her want of spirits may have affected her temper ; but, I am sure, she has always spoken of your lordship in terms that shewed her sense of your distinctions and personal advantages.’

If vanity is a vegetable, it must bear, as one of its essential characteristics, the epithet of ‘ *sempervirens* ;’ for even Lord Luxmore, wounded in body and mind, bruised from head to foot, unable to turn in his bed, and doubting whether he could exist through the day, felt a flush of self-complacency glide over his cheek, when Gertrude, by implication, paid a compliment to what he had been twenty years before :—he pressed the finger he had hooked with his, and besought her to go on, as he was, he said, ‘ charmed with all she said.’

She returned to the charge, and again named the interview with the countess, as the first step towards

towards peace and comfort; but not even the recent compliment could sweeten the prescription; and though he ceased to speak of the countess very harshly, he was firm in his refusal: he described her as destitute of feeling; some instances he detailed; some he hinted at; one he attempted, but his voice became choked; all he reprobated; and it was impossible to bend him. When, meaning to extenuate, Gertrude pleaded the want of good education, he asked her what she herself had had: when she named the intoxicating effects of riches and rank, he asked whether, if put in possession of both, she should think them an excuse for being cruel. Nothing succeeded, or appeared likely to succeed, till, giving up the matter, she sighed and said, 'If Portargis is right in his persuasion, she cannot live long to displease any one.'

'How so?' asked his lordship, almost rising in his bed.

'She certainly is in very bad health.'

'Is she *indeed*?—Are you sure of it?—But, I suppose her bad health is the consequence of her parsimony; she starves herself and all of you, I dare say: I hear her whole soul is set upon money.—Well! it will be all the better for her son: I wish it would be so for you, Gertrude: but never flatter yourself, she will not leave you a sixpence, depend on it. But perhaps you think my visit to you, when I took you to Luxmore, looked like a wish to be on terms; it had nothing to do with it, I assure you; many times, indeed, have I resolved and sat down to write to Lady

Luxmore

Luxmore in hopes of hearing of you, but it was always a bitter pill.'

'Obliged, as I am, by your concern; my lord, I cannot but wish another motive had prompted you. It is impossible for me to be indifferent about Lady Luxmore, when I consider what I must have been, without her. My lamented friend, Mr. Sterling, was very good to me: his employing me and informing me, have been my education; and I own it makes me very anxious when I am forced to see how Lady Luxmore breaks. I know her apothecary has told her maid, that she cannot live two years; but, to her, he talks as if she were to outlive the whole world, which seems to me a very cruel deception.'

'She would not endure being talked to otherwise: she always liked the grossest flattery: I wish I had never tried it. But do you really think she is in very ill health? how does it appear?'

'She grows thin; she has a bad cough; she has no appetite; her strength decreases; and she complains she cannot sleep:—she seems very unhappy.'

'What can make *her* unhappy?'

'Probably the living in a state of separation from your lordship.'

'No, no; that *cannot* be the cause. The woman who laments such a separation, must have a heart, which, I am convinced, *that woman* never had. I see no good that can result from our meeting.'

'I am

‘I am sorry you do not.—Poor Portargis will be now quite miserable.’

‘Why, I am sure he cannot wish it;—does he?’

‘He is of my opinion, indeed, my lord.’

‘That is very strange.—Yet I can account for it—he sees you wish it.—I would rather it were not urged on me just now; for I really feel very ill.’

‘I will not say a word more, my lord.—Can I do any thing for your lordship, before I set off for town? Lord Portargis has offered to drive me; and Lady Luxmore will be anxious till I come.’

‘Why, you are not going!’

‘What can I do?—I cannot leave lady Luxmore.’

‘You will come back again.’

‘Excuse me, my lord,—I cannot.—I could be useful to you, were Lady Luxmore here, without being uneasy about her: but I am sure, if you had a daughter, you would not approve of her leaving her home and her best friend, to attend upon one of the family, who would not see the rest; and to *appear* to take part against Lady Luxmore, would subject me to a great deal of censure.’

‘Why need you care for censure?—you know you cannot deserve it.’

‘A poor excuse for risking it. I should be wretched, even with every support from internal consciousness, were I to expose myself to censure.’

The

The more cautious we have been, the more cautious we ought to be. Those who live at random may do as they please ; but Christianity pledges us to avoid every thing that can bring it into disrepute. I dare not offend the world.'

' I cannot understand your argument. In my opinion, the great use of a good character is the liberty it allows us.'

' Far from it, I think ; and beside, I cannot boast a good character ; it is enough for me if I have *none* at present ; but surely if we have proceeded a little way, ever so little, in doing right, it is of more importance to us to keep our footing, than it can be to those who have never attempted it.'

' This is over-refining, in my opinion. I should rather say that we might more safely deviate, if we are sure of getting back again.'

' If we are ; but which of us can say this ? But we are departing from our subject. I speak of the obligation on us to avoid, not only evil but the appearance of it ; and, indeed, one feels a natural jealousy on the subject : a jealousy that, on lower points, even the praise of the world will excite. Women who have been commended for neatness of dress, would not be seen with a spot on their clothes.'

' You are an amiable reasoner, my child, but I hope you will not have the cruelty to leave me : I shall die, inevitably, if you do.'

' I hope not ; for I really cannot return, unless you consent at least to see Lady Luxmore.'

' Well

‘Well then, let her come, if she will; but pray give her full liberty to do as she likes. I would not have her constrained, on any account. But this concession I make for your sake, and on condition that you do not quit me. Portargis can go to her, or you can write.’

With this permission, and in the persuasion that the earl was in no immediate danger of dying, she sought Lord Portargis, but he had not inclination enough for the embassy offered him, to promise any exertion of his negotiating abilities: he shrugged up his shoulders, and complimented her by saying, by a servant she could write, much more to the purpose than he could speak.’

As it was of importance to send off the messenger before his master could change his mind, she requested the groom to saddle his horse, and, in the mean time, wrote to the countess, saying that his lordship had had a restless night, and commissioned her to ask the favor of her coming to Richmond. On her own private opinion, she hoped he was not worse, and submitted to her ladyship the propriety of bringing with her what she might want, in case she should be detained till the earl’s recovery. She took the liberty of reminding her that she herself had no change of clothes, and begged she would order the servants to put together a few for her.

Having performed this part of her duty, she must have returned to her anxious post, had not the surgeons arrived. During their stay, she
breakfasted ;

breakfasted; and before she had finished that and a *tete-à-tete*, for which the viscount lay in wait, she had the satisfaction of hearing that the earl, it was hoped, would do well, if he would consent to be quiet. For this purpose, they positively forbade any one but the nurse to enter the room for some hours, and, with nearly as much decision, and somewhat more of kind interest, they ordered Miss Aubrey to bed; but she felt that cold water and the open air would be far better restoratives. In this, Portargis concurred, and offered to accompany her, to take the air when she had performed her ablutions.

CHAPTER LIII.

Novel pleasures. Translations considered. Facts. The thirst of unwilling ignorance. Narrow basis of female-education. Waste of time on dead languages at public schools. A quicker method. Criticisms of women on the arts. Classics in usum Principissæ. Men our best teachers. A deceased literary character. Formation of a taste. An angler on the Thames. Anecdote of Thomson. A polite note.

IN the calm cheerfulness, the almost poetic influence of the balmy zephyrs on the Thames, Gertrude forgot all she had suffered. A breeze tempered the warmth of the season: she descended from the garden, and standing on the margin of the river, another step carried her into a boat, which Portargis had prepared for her, and which he rowed through the bridge, in quest of the *most* beautiful spot of the landscape, if the most beautiful could be found, where all seemed equally lovely. She returned, almost oppressed with delight, and had the pleasure of hearing that the earl had had some natural sleep; that when he waked he had enquired for her, but on hearing she would attend him as soon as she was permitted, he had expressed himself satisfied.

She was at no loss to pass the day. To those who know little of liberty or enjoyment, even the
 pause

pause of annoyance is positive happiness ; and in sitting with Portargis in a boat, watching the turn of tide, or in contemplating the busy scenes of a river, whose banks gave to the eye the reality of that which she had read in description, she was incessantly amused. Nature had sown in her mind the seeds of taste ; and the scarceness of opportunity and the stimulations she had met, in her short and almost dream-like intercourse with the family of Mr. Sydenham, rendered her doubly alive to all the means of improving it. She had, in the time since her visit to them, done all in her power to add to the very little she seemed to herself to know, and was now arrived at that stage of literature, when not from vanity, but want, not from inquisitiveness, but laudable curiosity, she lamented not being able to read in the original, those classic authors whose works, she knew, were copied, if not translated, in much of what she had read*. She had not forgotten

* We enter most cordially into the misery of all our fellow-creatures doomed to guess at what an author has written, by translation. The best cannot be perfect ; the worst are in some cases worse than none. Klopstock's 'Messiah' has been disgraced, and most dishonestly, by such a translation as neither want nor ignorance can excuse. Mrs. Lenox was *learning* French when she began to translate for publication : in one of her works *les enfans perdus* are presented to us as *the lost children*. Fairfax's Tasso, so celebrated, gives, in the outset, an angel's *humid*, instead of *well-poised* pinions. We could quote to a great length ; but we will rather record a fact received from one who never deviated from truth, and which shews a double danger in translation. In an old version

forgotten or neglected Mr. Sydenham's advice, but what she had been able to do for herself, fell far short of her wishes. None but fellow-sufferers with her, can tell what it is to meet with something *explained* in an unintelligible language, or to be just aware that there is a sense unattainable to us, locked up in three lines of Horace or of Virgil;—lines fraught with eloquence!—lines that will not speak!—lines that, to the untaught eye, present only the arbitrary arrangement of the alphabet!

With her mind in this state, and her feelings set to their keenest edge by novel delight, she was almost angry at hearing Portargis, who enjoyed her pleasures by reflection, if not in their source, and who had not yet succeeded in forgetting the re-iteration to which Mr. Sydenham had doomed his infant ears, repeat, as he played with the oar, and dashed his companion, those lovely lines from the Georgics, 'Rura mihi et rigui,' &c. She intreated him to translate them; she persuaded

sion of the *Æneid* the words *Conticuere omnes* had been rendered, 'They *whisted* all, i. e. they were silent; a typographical misunderstanding altered it to 'They *whistled* all.'

If any reader wishes for more amusement of this sort, it may be found abundantly in D'Israeli's 'Curiosities of Literature;' An instance which he gives of Lord Bolingbroke's explaining a passage in Virgil, as referring to one in Sallust, Livy, or Tacitus, reminds us of the communication of a classical friend, who started, in his early studies, at finding the exclamation 'Herclè,' used in the 'Amphitryon' of Plautus. We should affront our readers by explaining the absurdity.

him

him to repeat them again and again: he was astonished that what he had recollected by chance, and from the association of ideas, should seem, to any one, so valuable. His good nature was gratified: he took her from the water's edge into the village; he purchased for her a Virgil and a Horace—the best he could procure; and what was, in the present local situation and stage of the incipient business, still more valuable, as containing the key of these treasures, a grammar, and a dictionary: with these, they returned to the boat; and there Gertrude received her first lesson in the Latin classics—her companion enlivening her toil by translating passages which caught his eye, and encouraging her by his astonishment, that a girl should know any thing of the cases of nouns or the tenses of verbs.

‘ You forget,’ said she, ‘ the advantages I have had in working for poor Mr. Sterling, he knew so much, and was so communicative, that it was impossible not to learn from him. I heard, occasionally, his conversation with gentlemen who, I suppose, must be first-rate scholars: he dictated to me, and never refused to explain, as far as I could comprehend, what I wrote. O! you do not know, Portargis, the benefit of being compelled to do what is very dull, or the loss such a friend is to me.

Gertrude was perfectly right in her appreciation. ‘ The worst road,’ as a sensible writer has said, ‘ is always the best remembered;’ and the inclined plane, on which too many of us are driven along the road of instruction, does not ad-

mit of a pace slow enough to learn well. Few observations are more mortifying to those anxious for the advantage of a rising generation, than that forced on us by seeing how very small is the proportion of those who have learned, to the number taught.—‘ I remember doing it, when I was learning; but I know nothing of it now,’—is a common reply to queries on rational subjects!—and it is with conscientious teachers, a subject of discouraging regret, when they see the almost industrious pains taken by young people to undo what has been done for them. We have, however, reason to hope that, without *our* intervention, improvement in the ability and inclination to apply, will soon be more generally visible: a plan is pursuing, in a few select houses of education, which cannot fail of giving a new stimulus to female talents: a real taste for the arts is excited, and measures are taking to give that impulse to the mind and its faculties, which shall retain its energy, even at a distance from the hand that gives it. But we still have to lament, that however well this may be accomplished, the scale of action is not sufficiently grand. We cannot blame teachers; we blame parents for not requiring in the best aggregate-education for their daughters, the best detail. As long as translations, abstracts, and extracts from works containing nothing exceptionable, beauties, and second-rate literature, are considered as *sufficient* for women, there will always be book-makers for them; and consequently a strong line will be drawn between the agreeable and the useful: the former may certainly

tainly suit nine-tenths of the community; but it is for the other tenth we plead, with an earnest desire that every girl, whose parents have only to consult their own inclinations, may be indulged in the privilege of learning *thoroughly*, if she chuses the trouble.

If it may be permitted us to speak on a subject on which we cannot be competent to decide, we would remark on the common objection made to the time bestowed, in the education of boys, on the acquirement of the dead languages. When it becomes a question whether a little lad shall be sent to a public-school, or have a tutor at home; the *waste of time* on Latin and Greek is always an objection brought forward by the advocates for the latter*; and if a tutor who can, at the same time, *insinuate* the most useful of modern languages, be ultimately engaged, he will readily undertake to teach 'my lord' to read 'Tite Live' in six months; but rapid growth has never yet been found, at least in the vegetable kingdom, synonymous with durability, and 'Tite Live,' thus read, becomes, at best, only a vocabulary. No one, in complaining of the time bestowed on the dead languages, includes

* Of kin and of similar authority, are objections we have heard made to the unreasonable term of seven years, bestowed on the apprenticeship of lads, to trades not difficult in the mystery attached to them. Mrs. Scourge confesses herself quite angry that 'those poor fellows should be tied neck and heels for seven long years:—she asks them if they do not feel miserable; and they answer in the affirmative; so she *must* be right. Let her go to the parents.

In the consideration, what the dead languages give in return. While they are acquiring, the mind is forming: the preference of what is great and good is becoming firm: precepts, a shade off the didactic of religion, and carried to the heart by examples with which we claim kindred, are digested. The mass of virtuous counsel, by being broken into parts, finds its way to meet occasions of acceptance; what is learnt is applied; and a diligent lad who has any taste or talent, if the world or his friends and companions have not spoiled him, comes out of the hands of his masters, a man in dispositions, and wanting only experience to make him useful to society. We speak not of, or to, fools, blockheads, grooms, or prize-fighters; but, supposing the benefits of a classical education to be fairly used, on this supposition we may venture to say, that, reserving our prime obedience, and the first rank in our estimation, for the Sacred Writings, the wisdom and the virtue to be learned, under judicious teachers, from those writers whom we style 'the classics,' are well worth the time employed at public schools, in attaining their language, and that, whatever facility six *months* private teaching might give in translating 'Tite Live,' six *years* are not more than sufficient to teach what he has to tell. What is the reason that girls can so seldom give any other than a very general answer to any question in what they call their 'studies?' 'Tis because the mind is a shallow soil; and the plants set in it, run, like the poplar, on the surface, whereas in boys' education, the soil is enriching

riching even while the seed is sowing; and if the climate suits its growth, the master looks rather for oaks than osiers. We could do ruinous mischief—most unwillingly should we attempt it—were we to reveal the harvest of our own experience, the incredible instances of deficient information in the teacher and the taught; but wishing only to warn the ignorant that ignorance every day has less chance of escaping detection, and to call on the world to prize real attainments and high integrity, where they are to be found, we declare ourselves inflexibly hostile to the plan for reading ‘Tite Live,’ or any classic, in six months*, and not less so to that of educating girls on the basis of mere memory.

In lamenting that women are not yet educated entirely as we could wish, we must not, however, omit noticing, the visible improvement made by them in those branches with which they are intrusted. Any one accustomed to a regular attendance on the exhibitions of pictures in London, must be gratified in remarking the difference between the criticisms made now by females, and those which would have escaped them some years ago; and in the juvenile audience of public lectures, there is much to requite the exertions of the lecturer.

We may seem, perhaps, not to pay the ho-

* If any reader wishes for far better reasoning than ours on the good to be derived from the *waste of time* on the dead languages, we refer him to Dr. Barrow’s very sensible ‘Essays on Education.’

mage we ought, to genius; but if we are silent, it is because our respect for it places it out of the circle of our animadversion: our endeavors are confined to making mere *sensible* women: we are delighted to see our country not at all deficient in examples of great female intellect: we wish to make a moderate endowment answer the best purposes.

And in this anxiety we cannot but consider with regret, the loss of an opportunity which we awaited with hope and expectation, as one which would have assisted the industrious, and in its effect might have raised the general estimation of English ladies. The question ‘How ought the presumptive heiress to a throne, to be educated?’ required a very short and simple answer; and that answer, once admitted, like all other decisions, made the next question the means of carrying it into execution. Those means, we conceived, would be such as admitted of a little useful accommodation; and we flattered ourselves with being furnished, under royal auspices, with the classics, Greek and Latin, ‘in usum Principissæ:’ editions of our poets would have followed; every one would have been emulous of some offering; and the minds of the to-be governed of the female sex, would have been educating with that of the personage to govern. In these editions, we would have advised no other adaptation than the omission of whatever offends against good manners: to rob us of that which appears less ‘*propre aux jeunes dames*’ would be to forget that the other sex ought to lend us their aid,

aid, and that to seek it, is a considerable part of our prudence. No girls walk so well as those used to the arm of a father: no girls are so well informed as those instructed by sensible men. Both advantages, it is admitted, need the temperament of female delicacy; but if the step is to be firm, or the intellect exerted to the extent of its powers, it must be by borrowing from the attainments, and accepting the condescension of our friends of the other sex. Let those who have the advantage of teachers, in the gentlemen of their family, know that gratitude itself can hardly appreciate it at its worth:—a brother who will communicate that of which a public education has put him in possession, and who, as circumstances call for it, will feed the hungry mind, demands every return of kindness and respect: a father who takes his share in teaching a groupe of girls, or a literary friend who will explain what puzzles an enquiring girl, are blessings we are too apt to judge of, only when withdrawn. If the author of ‘*Considerations on the German War*,’ had been seen dissecting for Gertrude, when little more than a child, a blossom of the horse-chesnut, affection must have been added to the respect his talents claimed*.

It

* The erudite reader will know we mean here Israel Mauduit, a man whose integrity must rank him as highly in the estimation of the good, as his extraordinary mental endowments have placed him in that of the learned. Memoirs of him have appeared in some biographical works: we shall only indulge ourselves, by at least wishing more were known of him;

It was, indeed, chiefly in her own language, that Mr. Sterling had informed his handmaid; but she had had many collateral advantages: she had heard frequent opinions on the arts and all the subjects connected with them; and perhaps her pleasure, at the present moment, owed something of its vivid perceptions, to his having covered the smoked wainscot of his niece's dirty abode, as we may have said, with engravings, of prime excellence. Fashion had nought to say where he lived: the staircase, therefore, the drawing-room, and every square foot of pannel, not pre-occupied by books, were covered with these fine lessons in taste; and as they were, in the eyes of the owner, above all price, he was often eloquent on their beauties.

With ideas thus generated, Gertrude was prepared to see, to hear, and to feel; and in the

him: his conversation-talents were of the first class; and his encouragements to young industry were most efficacious. Seeing a little boy reading, he enquired what was his book, and finding it a Horace, he said 'That's right; if I had not read Horace, I should never have written the 'Considerations on the German War.'—Now, here was an instance of correct judgment; he spurred in the right place; he did not say 'I should not have been at court, or have stood well with the ministry, or driven a handsome carriage;' he made the exertion and the reward one and the same thing, and taught that the practice of virtue pays the virtuous. We wish we may be accused of telling a tale often told, when we say that, being connected with a mercantile house, and having a large order from government, he refused all profit, and furnished the goods at the price they cost,

SCENE

scene around her, she, without the smallest affectation of connoisseurship, could contemplate the parts, and try to discover why they so charmed her in the aggregate of composition. In the engravings of Woollett and Vivares, from the imagination of Smith of Chichester, and even from performances less excellent in their kind, which filled Mr. Sterling's portfolios, and which had their just rank in his judgment, she had imbibed an idea of the magic of perspective; but when, over all that she had seen of the disposition of wood and water, hill and valley, she saw thrown a coloring so soft, so harmonized by the atmosphere, her ardent wish '*esser anch, ella pittore,*' was humbled into despair. She surprised Portargis by her delight. When she called, 'Look, look at the passing cloud in the water!—O! see that sun-beam through the tree there!' he raised his head, and asked 'Where?'—'You have, you say, seen Windsor,' said he: 'I am surprised at your astonishment.' 'Perhaps you are right,' she replied; 'but yet I *feel* a difference; we go to the prospect at Windsor: it seems as if nature brought it to us here.' 'Be it as it may,' he kindly replied, 'I am delighted in seeing you so.—Shall we float down with the stream a little way?'

They had gone only a few yards, when they nearly grazed the moored punt of one of those patient votaries of the rod and line, who fish six days in the week for their solitary comfort, and join the dominical anglers of the Thames, in their sabbatical amusement, by way of recreation. Portargis rested
on

on his oars, to enquire what had been his sport. Gertrude broke out into expressions of new delight.

‘Perhaps the young lady has never seen this spot till now,’ said the angler. Portargis answered for her in an acquiescing negative.

‘You have then, indeed, a great pleasure,’ said he: ‘and I do not wonder at your feeling. When I was a boy, I have walked from London hither and back, for the pleasure of lying on the grass here a whole day, with nothing but a piece of bread and cheese for my dinner. I read all the best of our English poets under that thorn in the park there; and I love Lord Bacon’s ‘*Essays*,’ I think, the more for conning them under the shade of trees, which, I can fancy, shaded him while he framed them. Young lady, your countenance, and your expressions tell me you love poetry: have you got a Thomson with you?—you should read his ‘*Seasons*’ in his scenery: his ideas were imbibed from the very objects round you; and surely if people go to various places, to eat and drink in perfection, it is as allowable to take a journey for the sake of feasting on a poet. I have a Thomson in my boat here, accept it from a stranger; and if ever we meet again, tell me how you found his descriptions and your sensations correspond*.

I shall

* We have mentioned Mr. Sterling’s approbation of Thomson as limited; and the world seems, of late years, to have much abated in their eulogium of him as a poet. The domestic character of Cowper’s ‘*Task*’ certainly reaches our affections much sooner than that sort of estranged stiffness that pervades ‘*the Seasons*,’ yet they abound in beauties;
and

I shall catch no fish while you stay; so good morning.'

With brief thanks, they parted; but not brief was the delight of Gertrude Aubrey: If she had, in the preceding half hour, wished to see how the great masters of the pencil, whose names she had heard, and whose signatures she had seen to engravings from their works, would have treated the scene around her, she now felt her curiosity diverted without diminution; and she eagerly informed herself, and with perceptions yet unexperienced, even in reading the same lines, how the poet of the place, he whose eye must have been saturated with every object in her view, who had looked on the same trees and meadows she now gazed on, and whose image the same stream that now reflected hers had shewn, while his mind with stronger reflection portrayed its every impression, could describe to the intellectual vision—and charm the ear with that which addresses itself to the eye*.

' There

and there is in them a grand recognition of Providence, which is, we confess, more grateful to our feelings than the melancholy recoil to the errors of our neighbors, so prominent, so excusable, so pitiable, in the diseased imagination of the amiable bard of Olney. We can allow others to differ from us; but we claim forgiveness and excuse. Cowper has been unjust to the prototype of Mr. Sterling; he did not know him; perhaps had he known how highly he ranked his poetry, at a time when it was difficult to persuade him to read a modern production, he might have spoken 'smoother things.'

* We have deliberated whether we ought to treat our readers with an anecdote of Thomson: we are averse to the communication;

‘ There is still more pleasure for you,’ said Lord Portargis : ‘ we will dine early ; and I will drive you to the hill afterwards. I dare say, if my mother comes, she will not be here too soon for us.’

‘ I think it is time to go back,’ said she ; ‘ your man may be returned by now, and I must know what I have to do. I am infinitely obliged to you for my enjoyment.’

They returned; she, now reading from Thomson, now getting Portargis to construe lines from Horace or Virgil, and now turning over the dictionary, or reviving her acquaintance with the declension of a noun: the viscount, in love with the surprising novelty of a quiet pleasure, and charmed, almost into an enthusiasm, for moderation and rural life.

The earl had remained tranquil, and now requested to see her. She went to him, and found him far better than she could have hoped: he was cheered by the opinion given of his bruises, and

communication; but we are told, it is too curious to be suppressed: we obey, reminding our readers that the foibles of genius have a stronger claim to forgiveness than any other.

It is well known, that the pleasures of ‘ the first and second course’ were not undervalued by Thomson. He dined at Mr. Beard’s at Hampton, one day when there was a turkey-poult on table, which he had nearly finished: when Lady Harriet politely expressed her satisfaction in seeing that he liked it: ‘ I wish there were two of them,’ he replied; and hearing there was another in the larder, he suffered it to be picked and roasted. Let us turn away from this corruption of our mortal part, and think of his hymn at the end of his ‘ Seasons.’

would

would have detained her, by assuring her her presence did him good; but she adhered to the orders given, and on quitting his chamber, met a servant with a silver waiter in his hand, on which he presented her the note returned by the countess. It ran thus :

‘ Lady Luxmore is sorry *to inform* Miss Aubrey has had *a bad* return *of* her cough: and *as the* only *means* to restore *her* health, is advised *both* by a *friend* and Phycian to go to *Brighton*. It gives her the *greatest concern* to be prevented *attending* his lordship, being *so* unfortunate as her dressing-glass gave way, and fell *on* her foot. It is *a consolation* that Lord Luxmore’s valet has been *she hears* with him Ten Years *and* is very attentive *and* an excellent servant and that the groom has lived he says in ———shire just by Luxmore four. I hope to be able to get down *to Richmond* to-morrow night, *but* I can’t come to-day on *no* account.

‘ Your sincere friend and *well*
wisher N. Luxmore.

Let no one doubt the authenticity of this epistle : it is, in more senses than one, original. If it be asked how it is possible that, except in a single instance, the orthography is correct, be it known by the inexperienced in literature, that the most ignorant persons spell best. Lady Luxmore was too prudent ever to *set to* on such an occasion, with-
out

out Entick's dictionary at her hand ; but she certainly forgot to look under the head 'PHY.'

The note needing a commentator, Gertrude was obliged to call into her little parlor the man who had brought it : ' he was afeard as she might think him a long while, but he had waited mortation long for the noat, and my lady had given him one, and sent for it back again, whiles she did another. And the girls had axed if Miss did'nt want some clothes ; but he could'nt tell ; so they had given him, he believed, her night-cap in that there bundle, but he had kept it in his pocket, because in these here places he knowed well enough all their fingers is fish hooks.'

The servants, indeed, had shewn more thought than their lady, and had sent a change of raiment.'

CHAPTER LIV.

A wife expected. Matrimonial anecdote. A foggy morning. A fever. A conjugal interview. Friendly assiduities. Medical prudence. The recovery. An accommodating party. An excursion proposed. Noble associations.

No disappointment, no vexatious accident, thwarted the scheme of subsequent pleasure proposed for Gertrude.—Lord Portargis drove her to the hill, and as far as she would go beyond it. The earl had been a little restless, but was, when she went to him with an account of her delightful ride, again composed: he allowed her to go to bed, where she slept refreshingly. The next morning he was still better, and began to chafe at the idea of his lady's unnecessary visit; but Gertrude had only to give this a hearing. She secured the best apartments in the house for the countess, and went again on the water, and again to the hill, sate with the earl as much as was permitted; and late in the evening, so late that to see his lordship, was felicity postponed to a future day—received Lady Luxmore.

Every attempt of Portargis's during the day, to engage Gertrude in the consideration of his own wishes, had been turned by her to the grand subject of the reconciliation she had so much at heart!

heart! and he was convinced it was a threshold, over which he must pass, or at which he must stumble. Influenced by her steadiness, and persuaded by her expostulations, he wisely determined to clear the ground for his own race, by helping those who had precedence, to get out of his way*. He therefore behaved to his mother 'in his best manner,' was respectful and accommodating; and persevered in this, long enough at the first interview, to put her in tolerable good humor with herself.

Messages passed between the earl's chamber and lady Luxmore's drawing-room: the surgeons again made a favorable report; and Gertrude was sent for to the bed-side.

In this interview, she failed not to place Lady Luxmore's conjugal anxiety in the fairest point of view, and to describe the great propriety of the viscount's conduct. The earl wished his lady had

* This sort of minor practice of the precept, 'Make a bridge, even of gold, for a flying enemy,' has been, in some instances, ludicrously attended to.—A dignitary of the church, whom we are proud to call our friend, was driven to think of it, on the happiest morning of his life. Under circumstances of peculiar interest, he went with the very deserving object of his best affections, to a church at the west end of the town, from which he hoped in half an hour to bring away his bride:—a couple, of the lower order, had got possession of the altar; and no gentle intreaty would prevail on them to yield to the lady their prescriptive right of precedence:—'Well then,' said our expert friend, 'since you are so obstinate, I will indulge you, even more than you deserve:'—he put on his surplice, and married off his obstacles, by which time, the right reverend friend whom he expected, arrived.

not

not taken the trouble of coming, and began to suggest excuses against seeing her ; but to these, Gertrude was duly deaf: she evaded the discussion; and by a simple adherence to what she thought right, she managed the father as she had done the son, and brought him, by gentle persuasion, to say, that ‘ if he passed a tolerable night, he would see her in the morning.’

Lord Portargis, aware how much he must soon lose of his pleasure in Gertrude’s *tête-à-tête* society; and either flattering himself she could not now need rest, or else not recollecting that she could, called her before six in the morning; and, in his experience, concluding, without looking from his window, that

‘ Del Tamigi——le lucid’ onde,’

must, at all hours, be, however variously, equally the source of rapture to her, he led her out, in one of those exhalations which are the harbingers of a sultry day, and which, though grateful in their fruits, seem pestiferous in their period of duration. If she did not *manifest*, he supposed she must *feel* some reluctance; but whether supposed or real, it gave way to his positive assertion, that ‘ the fog would be gone in five minutes;’ and in spite of the chill that overspread her, she tried to admire the glistening objects which this embodying vapor brought forward to sight, and which, like many weeds in society, might have passed unnoticed, if not distinguished by protruding finery.

The river was the Thames; the opposite meadows were the boast of lovely Twickenham, and all

was what she had so admired but the day before ; yet, why she scarce knew, the charm seemed vanished ; and she could think of nothing but the clammy adhesion of her flaccid shoes, and the fancied feeling of a wet blanket spread over her person. Unwilling as she was, to control her companion, when his wishes steered right, she was compelled to request she might return : he approved her choice ; and seeing a good fire prepared for boiling tea-kettles and toasting bread, he advised her as she passed, to stop and dry her clothes.—The temptation was irresistible, and the delightful feeling atoned for all she had endured ; but the heat which she had now acquired, she could not get rid of ; and it was attended with uneasiness that made her lie down on her bed ; and here she lay, confined with a fever, that soon occasioned anxiety for her life.

The first alarm had been taken by the viscount, who, meeting her at the door of her chamber, when she had, in defiance of her wretched feelings, risen to begin the duties of the day, had perceived the alteration in her looks, and prudently sent her back again : he then summoned the medical attendant who happened to be in his father's room, and by his express injunction, and controlled by the fear that any resistance might increase the trouble illness would occasion, she remained quiet.—She wrote on a scrap of paper to Portargis, her earnest intreaty that he would supply her place in bringing about a meeting between his father and mother ; and the terms being affectionate,

fectionate, and something like a distant hope consequently to be extracted from them, he felt himself piqued to assist her, and determined not to fail her expectations. When his mother rose, therefore, he told her, with an interest he had no occasion to feign, what was the situation of Gertrude—ordered breakfast—enquired after his father; and hearing he had had rather a restless night, went, in all duteous observance, to enquire into the circumstances, which were such as would have afforded a plausible excuse for dismissing his wife without an audience, had not his son, in describing the indisposition of Gertrude, endeavored to impress on the earl's mind, the cruelty of not doing what would contribute to her happiness, when, 'poor girl! she had been so good whenever they were ill, and, he did not doubt, this illness was the consequence of her want of rest and peace.'

The contrast between the father's and son's feelings, and the influence of them on their judgment, might have amused an uninterested observer. Portargis, who could scarcely be ignorant that the proximate cause of what Gertrude suffered, was his taking her, from her bed, into an atmosphere loaded with exhalation, not enduring to consider himself as even the casual author of evil to her, ascribed it to what she had done for his father; while the earl, glad at any rate to connect in one idea himself and her, though he grieved as sincerely, and was as much alarmed as his son, felt soothed by thinking those exertions by which she had made herself ill, were for *him*. Perhaps his

seeing that nothing but an union of powers could procure the comforts she stood in need of, induced him still more readily to yield to his son's arguments for a truce, if not for a peace ; and to consult about her, he consented to see his wife, who, fortified by volatile salts, and an additional spoonful of brandy in her tea, went, attended by her son, to make clinical observations on the state of her affairs. Why she enquired in her way at what hour the post set out, would have puzzled a stranger ; but as she had, on deciding to come to Richmond, written one note to her milliner, to be ready ' in case she wanted any thing in a hurry ;' it was but fair she should send another to release or expedite her retained powers.

But notwithstanding all these new considerations, and Gertrude's previous cares, long habit, invincible as inherited nature!—would predominate in this meeting ; and the parties, who had entertained sentiments perhaps nearly in unison before they met, i. e. those of mutual dislike, now on sight of each other, seemed, like cats and bantam-cocks, to kindle at the view. Cold enquiries, dry replies, long pauses, and manifestations of immediate weariness, threatened a speedy finish to the languid conference. Portargis would have retired ; but his father, as if to convince his wife that he had nothing to say to her, desired him to remain. He obeyed, but this was all in his power. He could not, as Gertrude would have done, fill up the pauses, shade off ambiguous expressions, and lead towards subjects rather conciliating than irritating. Portargis,

argis, had his mind been free, had no talent of this sort, and now he could only look on the Thames from the window, recollect 'poor Gatty,' and half own to himself he had been too impatient.

The mistress of the house by this time understood the guests she had got, and whom she certainly did not wish to dismiss. No persons understand *the world*, as it is called, better than such as live by its imaginary wants; such as are real, do not form half so good a causeway to the recess in which its sincerity is deposited. The good lady of the Castle, accepting, as positive merit, the quietness, the civility, and the unwillingness to give trouble, which were the only features of Gertrude's character that came within her comprehension, had become extremely interested about her; and now concluding that the sacrifice of her rest to what she supposed *filial* duty, had destroyed her health, she, after extolling her virtues to three or four of her lively daughters, went herself to see of what use she could be to her. Gertrude, neither intimidated by experience, nor alarmed by selfishness, was sorry to cause any sensation in those about her; but she felt obliged by her attentions, and made use of the opportunity to request that Lady Luxmore, who, she said, relying on her, had brought no servant, might have every consideration—and to set right the notions hinted of *filial* goodness on her part, by saying she was herself a clergyman's daughter, whom the family had brought up. The supposition was changed at the next visit, when the hostess brought her some barley-water, into expressions of concern

concern for what 'that sweet young lord, who had the look of a prince,' must feel in being deprived of 'her dear company,' and ending in reports of the willow-green moping of the abovementioned hero. It was not quite so easy to set this right; but as there was an advantage connected with it, that of preventing any observation on the earl's partiality, she was not particularly anxious to contradict what she knew a short time must correct.

In another way, the good hostess served her. In her interviews with the countess, to whom she had found means of recommending herself, she went before-hand with all her actions and sentiments. She 'was sure her ladyship must be so concerned for that sweet young lady;' she 'wished her ladyship would condescend to tell her any thing she could do.' 'Whenever her ladyship chose to see her, she would attend her;' she 'could assure her ladyship the fever was not at all catching;' no, 'quite the contrary.' 'If her ladyship pleased, the young lady, she dared to say, would be very glad to see her, and she would go before her, or, as her ladyship was so lame—dear, it was a sad thing! perhaps she would have the goodness to lean on her arm;—and this was the way; just by; but a few steps farther!—all plain ground; no going up or down: that was one of the beauties of her house.'

Thus she dragged or coaxed her titled guest into the chamber and into decorum; and staying during the visits, and cutting short whatever replies indicated selfish anxiety, she prevented Lady Luxmore from shewing, and herself from seeing,
what

what would have been less amiable than her suppositions.

The hope that a few hours would release her from her confinement, Gertrude had been obliged, in the course of the first day, to abandon; but hearing by billets from the viscount, that her wishes had been complied with,—that the earl was better, and all matters going on peaceably,—she strove to be content, and by strict obedience to obtain her liberty; but on the fourth day, feeling herself disappointed and her strength decreasing, it appeared to her a point of common prudence to provide against some error in the calculations of those who had, till this morning, insured her safety, but who now could not avoid her questions. Considering the minds she had to resort to, she saw no one adapted to her purpose: it was not the ardor of irregular passion, it was not even the fondness of young attachment, nor, above all, was it the cold lees of stagnant feelings that could now stand to her in the stead of departing vitality; but she had no option: she therefore requested the favor of seeing Lady Luxmore;—and she came to her.

It was new to hear from a patient the private opinion of a medical man; and it was new to hear it revealed, as a distinguished confidence, under an injunction to strict secrecy; but so was the revelation made; and Lady Luxmore, with feelings that she did not know she possessed, heard, and was astonished at hearing, that she must prepare to lose one whom, till now, she seemed not to wish to retain.

Gertrude

Gertrude requested to be left as quiet as possible, and to have a few books fetched from town: she remitted every care of herself to those who, she saw, would not fail her; and she only wished she could withdraw from a world she felt little reluctance to quit, without being missed or regretted.

The alarm was spread in the house; and faults, failings, and animosities were all forgotten, or instantly changed into the most active vigilance. On quitting her, with a promise that all her requests should scrupulously be attended to, Lady Luxmore learnt, from the source whence Gertrude had derived her information, that it was too true, that her strength was sinking too fast, and her fever increasing; and it was hinted, that, though there could be neither doubt nor perplexity in the case, yet so valuable a life ought not to be lost without convincing the world that every effort had been made to save it*. Conceiving that no diligence would

* It has been our good fortune oftener to have cause to admire medical conduct than to wish it otherwise; but, as our experience has not been unexceptionably uniform, and we cannot subscribe to the opinion that life is to be hazarded even for the sake of telling plain truths, we may be allowed to hint the very great obligation medical gentlemen are under, to command, not only the expressions of their tongue, but those of their countenance.—We have seen a case where a worthy old servant was very nearly sent to his grave by a surgeon's shaking his head; and though this might have been construed into a salutary warning, yet as the man not only lived, but lived to good purpose, it was as well that he should live. In the country, much mischief arises from the practice of deferring to call in a physician till the apothecary

would equal that inspired by his deep feeling, Lord Portargis went himself, as fast as four horses could carry him, to fetch additional advice. Gertrude was informed of his errand, and grateful for his zeal; but it was impossible to disguise her persuasion that all care was in vain: she struggled to keep up till he should return, that she might thank him; but a few minutes before he arrived with the physician whom he had fetched, she had given her friends the option of seeing her for the last time.

Lord Luximore, ready to spring out of the chair in which he was drawn into her chamber, and not accustomed to sorrow, was agonized almost to convulsion: his son, on entering, was in a state of stu-

cary will no longer sustain the responsibility—a change of measure and medicines, seems to be wished for or pointed out by the change of advice; and when perseverance would some times succeed, the want of it proves fatal; beside, it is probably on the certainty that the danger is inferred from the very *calling in*; that the rural physicians are more ingenuous with their patients on the subject of their jeopardy, than those of the metropolis. We remember, with feelings little blunted by the lapse of many years, the pain occasioned us in this way;—our first confidence was shaken before the doctor had ascended the stairs, by hearing him advise the adding a few *guttæ* of something to a medicine—then came in, with one hand assiduously deposited in a tight pocket, the other in the bosom, the professor of physic:—he felt the pulse, he pronounced *they were enough to last us* for a fortnight.—‘And what at the end of the fortnight?’ said the lovely patient.—He ordered beef tea, and told of a lady who was sustained on it, six weeks.—‘And what became of her then?’ asked our friend, with a smile almost arch—‘O! she died.’—And so did our sweet sufferer in much less time.—Was this prudent?

pefaction,

pefaction, preferable to nothing but that which he might rouse into; and Lady Luxmore, a little more herself, still limping and irritated, was divided between two feelings, that of regret for the circumstances of inconvenience under which the misfortune occurred, and that of prescient foreboding of an irreparable privation.

The operative part of this tragic scene devolved on the landlady and on her kind daughters, who perhaps aware of the inefficiency of such grief, and thinking better of their own abilities, pressed forward, to the exclusion of the servants, and occupying the space left by the right honorable mourners near the bed, tried to prevent that which they considered fatal, but to which the sufferer owed her life: she fainted; and when at last recovered, her new medical attendant could banter her on the non-necessity of his journey: he ordered her a roast chicken; and doubly feed by the earl, worshipped by Portargis with devotion adapted to the Isola Sacra of the Tiber, and honored by the countess with a protestation that he was 'a charming, most delightful man,' he left Gertrude again to the care she had been under, and returned to town in a halo of those pleasant feelings which serve to counterbalance the wretched anxieties of the most anxious of all modes of making a fortune.

To watch the rapid recovery of a young and vigorous constitution, is a pleasure to which no one can be insensible; and this pleasure Gertrude certainly afforded, in as large a portion as each could feel, to those around her. The earl and she were

soon

soon on a parallel of convalescence, and at the same time able to enjoy the benefit of an airing. She, indeed, could walk when he was carried; but there was now much enjoyment for both; and in the kindness shewn her, she felt more than a compensation for her illness, which seemed to have procured her a great increase, or at least a much more open avowal of valuable regard. He listened with pleasure to her expressions of deep-felt gratitude for her preservation, and with approbation to her sincere wish for domestic peace in the family, to which he promised to contribute to the utmost of his power.

It is but justice to the countess to make known that, in coming to Richmond, it had been her determination to wait there ‘the end of the business.’ When she made this resolve, she did not indeed expect ‘the end’ that it had really attained; but circumstances had left her almost without a choice; and had she gone home now, it must have been absolutely alone, for no one would have left Gertrude:—this was worse than remaining. A little offering was likewise made to her almost-expired vanity, by the enquiries of those who, having been interested in the earl’s accident, supposed her so; and as she had intimated, at the first opportunity, that she should have liked the enquiries ‘in person,’ and was not by many degrees so retired in her habits and manners, as those who are born to rank, or those who know how to employ themselves in seclusion, she courted sudden intimacies, unwarned by repeated breaches, and was gratified with

with being, in any way, an object of attention. A paragraph in the fashionable newspaper of the morning, stating the *bulletin* of Lord Luxmore's health, and adding to it a high encomium on the conjugal merit of the countess, who had 'set out for Richmond to attend on her beloved lord,' settled her in her new virtue, and contributed much to the desirable purpose of keeping her in good humor.

But that which conduced the most to charm down Lord Luxmore's perpetually rising aversion towards the woman whom he had vowed, without any foundation, to love till death, was the conviction that she was fast approaching that farthest gate of the temple of Hymen; and by this stedfast belief he was led on, with a firm step, in the path of decorum, even under the disadvantage of being compelled to pass many hours of every day with her.

Early in August, the invalids were out of all danger, and in possession of all their powers, except that of walking freely, which the earl could not attempt; but to atone to himself for this, and to confirm the re-establishment of Gertrude's health, daily excursions were made in carriages round the country. Her pleasure in one sight, produced new promises of pleasure in another; and all the fine houses, fine pictures, and fine grounds within reach, were shewn her. Portargis was all affection; and his love seemed tempered, by the danger from which she had been rescued, into a more tender feeling than ever. His first enquiry every morning was concerning her health; and, remembering the symptoms that had ended in fever, he for many days,

days, went through an anatomical catechism. 'Does your head ache? Are you languid? Any pain in your limbs? You do not feel any shivering, do you? Shall I shut this window? Is it not too damp to venture out?'

The employment of the earl's retired moments was known only to himself. Encouraged and cheered by the decision he had made on sight of his wife, he was occupied whenever he was silent, with his settled purpose of marrying Gertrude; and there was scarcely a point to be discussed in his mind, that had not presented itself to his recollection; the propriety of the measure was not in the number; of the feasibility of it he could not doubt. He could restrain all visible signs of impatience, because he was convinced that he had not long to wait, and because his respect for Gertrude taught him that the smallest *lapsus linguæ* would be fatal to her acceptance of him; but, fixed on this object, he saw not, nor will such heated imaginations ever see, the truth; he perceived not that the very means by which he was restoring the health of his favorite, did the same kind service to his wife: he was too much lost in contemplation of his future felicity, to recollect that that which turns the centre turns the circumference of every wheel; and nobody being particularly awake on the subject, who could speak with a hope of attention, the matter of the countess's improved looks and powers remained unnoticed, till Gertrude mentioned it, as a cause of rejoicing, to Lord Portargis. He, no less convinced than his father of her jeopardy, and in his heart inclined to wish

wish any thing that would save him the trouble of hypocrisy, was yet so interested in her preservation, or, at least, in her standing between his father and Gertrude, that his satisfaction shewed itself; and in speaking of the wonders that Richmond-air had done for Lady Luxmore; he obtained the praise of filial affection. To Gertrude alone, was he confidential; for since the reproach she had uttered; he had not dared communicate, as freely as before, with his friend Sylvanus. She knew all that passed in his mind; and was soon persuaded that she could influence him in any thing, rather than in those points which related to herself. But she was too happy now, to see any evil through a telescope: she had not a wish, connected with her situation, ungratified, except two; one was that incessant desire of hearing of her mother which haunted her every day more and more; the other that, little less earnest, of renewing her intercourse with Mr. Sydenham's family; the first she dared not mention; the other she named to the earl, who, why she was at a loss to know, politely answered, after a few moments' consideration, that 'if she had any thing to say, he should be happy to add it to his next letter. The family were all well, except Miss Brett; and of Basil's return, there was at present again no prospect.'

With these several views and cares, the party, now become unwilling to separate, though not very desirous to remain together, agreed to join in a general removal to the coast, whither the countess, whose cough was pronounced nervous, *anglicè* incurable,

curable, was ordered, to forget it, and the earl was recommended to go, to perfect his recovery.

The prospect of the excursion was highly agreeable to Gertrude, who had never yet seen the sea; but the journey was the 'ne plus ultra' of delight to the viscount, to whom all the arrangements were committed. When the time was fixed, he was, from that moment, all bustle; and every day produced cause for a journey to town, to order something about the carriages, to visit his tailor, or to confer with his boot-maker or hatter; for in the strange revolution of manners which this world has, in the course of a few years, undergone, it is to be remarked, that persons of elevated rank have wondrously descended to the assumption of vulgar or petty cares. Time was, when noble-men were not to be seen in the shops of artificers employed in their wardrobes, and when noble-women were waited on at home, by those whose services were necessary to their decoration; but now, the duke scolds in person and in public, about the ill fitting of his garment, and the duchess personally insists on half a quarter of lace into her bargain.

That shopkeepers find what is called 'their account,' in this exhibition of solicitude, might perhaps be proved. There is no curiosity at this time so prevalent, as that of seeing, in a state of as intimate approximation as possible, the manners and deportment of those whose rank precludes personal acquaintance. The shops where most coronets are to be met with, have the greatest attraction for those whose rank is merely *gentle*; and to stand

next

next to a woman of high, rank whether of good or bad or no celebrity, is a gratification so attractive, that one might think somewhat was to be gained by friction, and that our plain homely steel would come back to us from such contact, improved into the sagacity of the mariner's compass. To try the finished habiliments of a great bride, is so bewitching, that shops have founded their reputation, and even recovered from bankruptcy, under the protection of this fashion, and one of the many touch-holes by which our *bourgeoisie* explode, is that opened by a silly preference of servants 'out of great families.'

To this avidity in its various forms, this 'galling the kibe' of those who walk before us, those public receptacles called watering-places owe half their mob. 'People of rank,' says Miss Gluethorpe from the Bank-side, 'are seen to so much advantage at the libraries!' and should it so happen that in the lottery of Neptune-place or Hygeia-square, a house should be occupied by a Lady Perdita Bonarien a maugre the Ta in her forehead, a Mrs. Seaweed-Nowhere is delighted to say that, only a wall, and mercy on the sconces of the inhabitants, how thin a wall!—separated them.

'Tis a poor, a paltry vanity, unworthy the just pride, or rather the generous content of our country. Let us live in our own rank, recommended to the regard of the worthy, born in that above us, by the propriety of our manners, the knowledge of ourselves. Let us, with eagerness, indulge our curiosity in endeavoring to learn how those live who

live,

live, in the best sense of the term, better than we do. Could we hear two phrases, very consonant to the genius of our island, as well as to the idiom of its language, restored, there would be much less misery, and somewhat less of vice and folly in the world. Let us learn, from the pressure of the times, if not from our good sense, to say, without looking gawky, 'It does not become my station in life,' and 'I cannot afford it.'

CHAPTER LV.

A setting-off. - Finishing to no purpose. Matters mend. Agreeable visitors. The visit returned. A delightful abode. Polite hospitality. Good girls. Perfect enjoyment. A reluctant farewell.

THE morning of departure arrived, and the cavalcade, which Portargis doubted not he was to marshal, came round on the rattling pavement to the sweep before the door. Lord Luxmore's travelling-chariot, neat, handsome, becoming his rank, and evincing no solicitude or ostentation, had four post-horses; Lady Luxmore's venerable family-coach, with blazonry that seemed to have run all over the pannels, with a balustrade of coronets on the top, and the springs well bound, as their only chance for reaching the coast of the English channel, was drawn by her own pair of ancient sorrels, assisted and escorted through a country, which alas! they could never hope to see, by a pair of leaders. An open carriage, the darling throne of the viscount, completed the number of vehicles necessary, and was drawn by two 'famous' greys of his own purchasing. On the *derriere* of the chariot, was fastened a trunk, containing the moveable wardrobes of the noblemen, and on the front axle-tree was placed a smaller one, which Portargis, having recollected it rather late in the preparation,

paration, had gone daily to town and sworn himself to the antipodes, to get finished to his mind, and fitted to its place. Loving a secret, because he loved not those with whom he should have communicated, he had contrived its coming home on the day when the countess went to town to make her arrangements: it had been placed in Gertrude's chamber; and one large space for her clothes, a smaller for her books, and G. A. in all the taste that morocco-leather, and gilt nails would admit, declared its possessor. But simple Gertrude had instantly divulged his lordship's generosity; and Lady Luxmore had commented on it, by observing that he was always throwing away his money on some nonsense or other; therefore, at the present moment, Gertrude had no fears of detection, nor any greater than that her *bijou* of accommodation, might be injured in being applied to the use for which it was intended.

Her ladyship had ordered to attend her, her own female servant and her cook; and with these damsels had arrived an immense basket, fortified with leather and iron, and padlocked in a way that secured it from depredation. The coachman was bid to descend; the footman was straining every nerve, and the maids were pushing with all their might, basket, coach, and horses, when Portargis, at once the Hermes and Argus of the scene, proceeded to enquire 'what the devil they were all at.'

'We are only getting *the* basket up, your lordship.' — 'Basket?' — 'Yes, your lordship, *our* basket; our people took it with 'em last year; it's

a nice basket y'mought say, for vegetables to go by water, as Thomas say it was formerly; but I can't say how it's to go by coach, being I didn't live at the time it went afore, your lordship.'

'I dare say,' said Mrs. Slipslop, looking at her rent sleeve, 'as it went at top like a himpeeral.'

'Himpeeral!' repeated the viscount, 'stand off; get away, or I'll kick you all to ———. What's in it? I say—what's in it? can't you speak?'

'Why can't you say, Tom?' said the coachman to his fellow-laborer, 'I believe, your lordship, its our liveries and dress hats.'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Slipslop, 'and the cook and my things.'

'What the deuce?' cried Portargis, 'is the cook in it? it may well be heavy!'

'O! no,' said the useful damsel, 'I be here, my lord; only its Mrs. Slipslop and my trunks and all our best things; and I hope as they won't take no harm, for they're what we ha' worked hard for, and we wants 'em all to go to a watering place, I knows, for I has been there afore, and I knows, as y'may say, what's fit.'

'Down with them,' said the viscount, 'send them all by the waggon.'

'O! no, no, your lordship,' screamed Mrs. Slipslop; 'I remember there's some of my lady's parryfernalirs, for the coach seats is cram full; and lawk-a-day! there's our parrot as cook would bring, all I could say; and the cat, for I could not bear to leave her soluntary, in a hand-basket, for I thought she'd fret after us; for she's very much attach

tach to me. I put a plate of victuals for her; and it's a nice place; no danger of turning topsy-turvey; and my lady's things is all safe; its nice and roomy.'

The duteous son, when he had heard his mother's name, said not another word: he left the driver of the leaders, who had now heard of what was doing behind him, to protest that the basket and its contents must come by the waggon, and slipt up stairs, to carry into execution the plan he had settled in his mind, for disposing of his passengers.

His arrangement was this: the open carriage with himself and Gertrude was to lead; the travelling-chariot was to contain his father and his crutches, which were still necessary; and in the spacious coach the countess and her two maids of honor could not be crowded, even with the six boxes that contained the contribution of the Richmond-milliners, and for which there would be ample room on the vacant fourth seat or the laps of those who occupied the other three. The footman went with the coachman on his seat; and Monsieur Chamborde on his own horse, with the two grooms, on the earl's and viscount's formed the equestrian attendance.

Lady Luxmore had not left her room where Gertrude was assisting her: they were therefore to be informed of their destinations; and Portargis beginning now to be sensible that all his happiness hung by the possibility of his carrying one point, felt his heart beat outrageously; and, like a culprit
hastening

hastening forward the only moments perhaps when misery would remain uncertain, he executed with great adroitness the office of whipper-in to his party: he sent Chamborde to help his father on his supports down the stair-case; and 'Gatty, Gatty!' corrected in a second edition into 'Miss Aubrey, Miss Aubrey!' was his summons to his mother.

Behold the groupe: the men-servants on the outside of the house, mounting and adjusting legs and stirrups; the waiters at the side of the carriages; the hostess ready to promise fine weather, pleasant journey, no dust, and gratitude for past favors, durable till the next, perhaps royal, importation effaced it; her daughters desirous to see the last of sweet Miss Aubrey; and Lord Luxmore, congratulating himself on having, for the first time, shuffled down the stairs without fear.

Now arrived the countess, hobbling a little, but drest with revived *éclat*, and designing to teach the sea-nymphs the fashions of London brought from Richmond, where she had found some very 'pretty milliners,' and, in her opinion, 'more moderate in their charges,' than at 'the west end of the town.' Gertrude closed the procession—a simple figure of white, holding by a grey ribbon with one hand, her gipsy-hat, and offering her other arm to Lady Luxmore, who put her by, not ungently, with—'No no, not now—so many people about.—I shall do very well.'

Portargis beckoning, tried to bring Gertrude forward; but she quitted not the countess, who
went

went out at the door, and surveying the cavalcade from the van to the rear, seemed to fix her eye on the open carriage.—‘Here’s your coach, Lady Luxmore,’ said Portargis, ‘this way; you had better get in, before we move.’—‘The coach!’ said her ladyship, ‘and pray who goes with me?’—‘Your servants are there,’ replied her son; ‘as you are an invalid, I thought it better they should attend you. You see my father is getting into the chariot, and his sticks take up all the room—pray get in.’

‘And do you think,’ asked her ladyship, in her natural tone, ‘that I will go stived up in the coach with my cook? not I indeed, sir. I shall go in the open carriage; I like to see about me as well as any body. I suppose there’s room for two in it.’

‘O! you can never bear it—pshaw! its nonsense to talk of it; you will be either burnt to death, or ——’

‘And pray, sir, who do you think is to bear it? you were not going alone, I dare say.’

‘I should go alone, unless Miss Aubrey will go. Come, Gatty, it will do you good.’

‘Stay till she has *my* leave, pray, Lord Portargis, I shall go myself——’

‘Then by——upon my honor, I will not drive you; it’s a very hilly road, and I am sure you will be afraid——but if you like to take the carriage, your coachman may drive it; he’s used to you, and I am not,’

‘No,

‘No, my lord, I shall not go to be driven by my coachman.’

‘Well! perhaps my father can take you, you see he’s having his carriage thrown open.’

‘Lord Luxmore, does not the chariot hold *two*?’

‘I am afraid you will be crowded, as I am an invalid here with my crutches, and I must ease my leg by laying it up now and then.’

‘Well then, I suppose I *am* to go in the coach; Come Miss.’

‘No, no; Gatty, come with me,’ said the viscount.

‘O! let Miss Aubrey come here,’ said the earl, ‘here’s plenty of room for *her*; she takes no room, and she will let me indulge.’

‘Miss Aubrey goes with *me*,’ concluded the countess, in a tone that closed the cadence in the key-note.

Lord Portargis jumped into his vehicle, and set off, at the risk of all the post-horses following his lead, and so they had decided to do, when her ladyship’s least serviceable foot was alone on the ground; they were stopt, and she ascended again with Gertrude and her household nymphs, who, before they got off the pavement, recollected that no orders had been given about the basket, and that therefore the parrot would die for want of water, the cat for want of food, and that ‘neither they nor their lady’ would have some changes of raiment, till the waggon, whose assistance had never been bespoken, should, in its benevolence, bring their habiliments.

It

It was now to the end of their journey, that Gertrude was compelled to look for her pleasure. Lady Luxmore's anger had grown sullen, and she suffered her maids to dispute whose fault it was that 'the basket' remained behind, and to deplore the probable fate of the parrot and the cat, without even reprehension. Gertrude tried to persuade them, as experience proved was just, that the mistress of the house would not be wanting in attention, that the parrot would scold and the cat mew, that the basket would be opened, and what was needed would be sent by the first conveyance from London.

They were thankful for the relief of a suggestion; and their conversation changed to exclamations of wonder on the part of her who had never been out of London, and the condescending information of the cook, who had travelled the road, as she said, 'millions of times,' and on the middle of Surbiton common rejoiced that 'it was by day-light that they crossed Hounslow heath.'

At the first halt, Lord Portargis, whose interest in a new arrangement had subdued part of his resentment, hoped to succeed in getting Gertrude to himself, and Lord Luxmore again offered the vacant seat of the chariot; but the countess could not be expected to forget what had so recently passed; and she extinguished all hope, by asking where were the tremendous hills she had been promised.

Having taken refreshment, they started again; and, on the road, Portargis could not conduct himself

himself with any temper, when he saw what was to be seen, and how Gertrude was precluded from enjoying it: he therefore fell back, and kept by the side of his mother's carriage, raising all the dust he could find, and terrifying her every moment by coming so close, that he risked mischief to her or to himself, while he pointed out to Gertrude, and to Gertrude solely and exclusively, the exquisite beauty of the lines of country, the rich plantations now just beginning in spots not to be of the brightest green, the well-situated houses, and the indescribable loveliness of the next ten miles: he hoped his mother might, at least pettishly, have said, 'Do take her with you, and be quiet;' but he knew not Lady Luxmore's patience: she bore all without flinching, however she scolded; and he began to despair of succeeding, even for one stage.

His humor was fast settling into ill, when one of those accidents by which fortune extricates us from our own follies, gave a turn to his temper, and influenced the movements of the party.

A handsome plain family-carriage stopt near the inn where they were to dine, almost at the moment of their arrival; and natural curiosity being excited by the bustle, and the seeming largeness of the coronetted party, who they were was soon known; and a gentleman sent up his visiting-ticket, with a request to be allowed to wait on Lady Luxmore, as an old friend of Mr. Sterling's.

Gertrude immediately recollected the name as that of one of Mr. Sterling's morning-visitors.

Lady

Lady Luxmore could recollect nothing: she hesitated and stammered, as if fearing a second Captain Smith might aim at the rest of her valuables, while Gertrude, who alone could speak on the subject, bursting into tears, repeated everything she could call to mind, connected with the name, but all was in vain: beyond a cold permission to see her, the countess would not proceed; and with this small encouragement, entered first two lovely young women, and then a gentleman, who introduced them as his daughters, and himself as too much indebted to the friendship of Mr. Sterling, to pass unimproved the opportunity of paying respect to her ladyship.

There is a gentle warmth in some human natures, which the 'thick-ribbed ice' of the highest latitude of ill-humor, cannot resist. Lady Luxmore smiled, and Mr. Frankland, who had hitherto spoken with caution of her deceased relative, finding that he awakened no painful feelings, indulged himself in those recapitulations of imagined benefits and distinguishing merits, by which the heart of an affectionate friend soothes itself, under one of the very bitterest of human privations.

The lovely young women had placed Gertrude between them, and as if needing not to be told why her handkerchief was in her hand, and the tears in her eyes, they pursued a conversation calculated to change the current of her ideas; they talked of the persons by whom they had heard of her, of the beauty of the country, and the pleasure of travelling, and on hearing their
father

father press a change of quarters, they intreated Gertrude, as if they thought she must have some share in the votes of the house, to use her influence in prevailing on Lady Luxmore and the rest of the party, to dine one mile farther, at Hilbury, where they lived, and whither they were returning.

The countess was now resuming, if not the privileges of a married woman, the restraints of one; she therefore, before she could engage herself, felt it necessary to enquire for Lord Luxmore; and finding that he had stopt short in a room with an inviting sofa, she ordered Gertrude to go to him with the proposition; and her messenger would have had no option, but for the fortunate entrance of Lord Portargis, who, hat on head and whip in hand, made his presence known by ‘Who the devil would have thought ——’

Gertrude and her friends were in view, as he advanced: it was impossible that a fashionable viscount, now nearly of age, could be disconcerted by two modest girls; but certainly his lordship stopt short, removed his hat, and recovering all his advantages of figure and manners, almost said, ‘I beg your pardon.’—Mr. Frankland came forward: Portargis did not retreat—‘Excuse my glove,’ came with more grace from lips that looked as if they could not be disingenuous, than any imitation, which he would have given if he had had time, of any one of the ‘famous fellows’ who were the models of his fashions.

Lady Luxmore not explaining, Mr. Frankland was left to explain; and Lord Portargis taking a
second

second, but not a very full look at the young women, forgot all his heavy-heeled lounging, and, with alacrity, sought his father, whom he assisted, with some credit to himself, into the room and to a seat.

A quarter of an hour, and Lord Luxmore's manners, made the party acquainted. The design of going another stage that day, was given up; and a cordial invitation to dine and sleep at Hilbury, was accepted.

For the conveyance thither, an arrangement was soon made; 'We are just,' said Miss Frankland to Gertrude, 'at the gate of our own grounds; and if you can walk a mile, my sister will accompany you, while I attend Lady Luxmore.' Gertrude could only say, 'It must be as her ladyship chuses;' but this reference did no harm: the discussion made no other alteration than releasing Miss Frankland. The three elders proceeded in Mr. Frankland's coach; the four juniors walked together.

Never had Gertrude seen any thing to compare with this part of Surry; and to equal this spot of it, would have taxed the knowledge and the taste of those more travelled than herself.

Nature had done much; and art had not deformed her beauties. Plantations, now opening, now closing, shewed the finest distances, the grandest bounds, the softest horizon, or presented, where, perhaps, less favorable forms would have called the attention, depths of foliage relieved by stately stems, while a cultivated underwood

or a rich turf, connected the produce with its parent soil.

Quitting the town by a path that ran behind it, they got on higher ground, which as it rose before them, falling off on either hand, formed one of those ridges, or hog's-backs, as they are called, so favorable to a distant prospect and a rich foreground. The summer had known none of that excess of heat, which brings premature autumn ; the time of year only gave body to the tints : the mossy grass of the downs, was not burnt up to a polished surface ; and the broken hollows, where an old oak seemed as if stopped in its descent, or the deep indenture of a gravel-road shewed by what track a cart had placed itself, as if to embellish the spot, gave here and there a beautiful variety of surface, and did what money and labor, and even taste, might have attempted in vain.

The young women, though but recent inhabitants of their present abode, were well-informed of the objects which the view reached, and could point out, from observations connected with various elegant branches of knowledge, the strongly-marked differences of ærial tints. To Gertrude, who had never seen the sea, it was delight to be told that she looked towards it, and that the space it occupied in the horizon, was to be precisely ascertained, even at that distance.

A smaller *cordon* of paling inclosed the side of a hill, sloping in all directions, and shewing the house below a terrace which divided the declivity. Beyond the house, the land still stretched away
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in a gentle descent to the edge of an extensive piece of water; and farther on, at the best distance, rose again hills clothed with wood, and distinguished by those interesting appellations, which make us seek in our walks the very foot-marks of the Roman soldier.

Conversation had not flagged. Miss Frankland had not found it difficult to talk to Gertrude; and Portargis, feeling it worth while to be agreeable, and not knowing how to *contrive* it, had succeeded even more than usually well: he had told Miss Lucy Frankland, that ‘Gatty and he had been brought up together,—that he loved her like a sister,—that he was sure she loved him as well,—that she was one of the best girls in the world, and could learn any thing,—that she was just recovered from an illness caught by walking in the damp,—and that he did not know what Lady Luxmore would do without her.—Poor girl! she had had a sad loss in Mr. Sterling, for though he certainly made her a great slave, she liked it, and she had a great regard for the old gentleman.’

All this was interesting to the kind and obliging heart of Lucy Frankland: she gave Gertrude credit for deserving all that was said; and as she did not know Viscount Portargis, or the real state of affairs in the family, she could not perceive that he meant her not to understand two things; the one, that he had chosen Gertrude for Viscountess Portargis; the other, that it was he who took her out to walk in the damp, and laid her up.—Few men pride themselves on a passion; and
few

few men or women are indifferent to the estimation of a stranger.

A very large family of young people; and yet not all their number, had already received the coach-party, and were now waiting for the walkers. Miss Frankland was, by one of those misfortunes which, alas! too often close the list of a numerous progeny, mistress of her father's house; but she had no anxiety in her absence: every thing was too well-ordered, and those growing up under her, too well-trained, to need her presence. She now took her place in the hospitalities of a noble mansion; and Lady Luxmore condescended to say, that Miss Frankland was 'a very pretty kind of young woman.'

On returning to the drawing-room, Mr. Frankland, doing honor to himself in shewing it to another, introduced to the countess and her satellite, a lady of an appearance so every thing she ought to have been, that her recommendation seemed written on her forehead. 'To this friend,' said he, 'we are all obliged for services that nothing can repay. You come on a festival, Lady Luxmore; for we celebrate to-day, the sixteenth anniversary of our obligations to Mrs. Hartley. She has been, during that time, our nurse, our teacher, our example, and I hope will ever continue our domestic friend.'

Dinner, strange to say! came too soon for the wishes of the guests. Lord Luxmore seemed taking a lesson in the science of human happiness, from Mr. Frankland and two or three guests, who,
by

by their conversation, might be supposed neighbors. His son was attended to, by two very well-bred lads; and the eldest lady and Mrs Hartley entertained the countess by answering her questions, and finding subject for more. Books and prints were scattered on the tables of a room too spacious to make one part an annoyance to another; and every one had the power of being pleased in their own way, if they had any way of their own; and even if they had not, the lawn, the sheep, the peacocks, the guinea-fowls, and the circumjacent country, would have got rid of longer time than they had to wait.

The family and a few guests, made a large party at an ample and elegant table, -where the utmost good manners dispensed with compliment and formality. They were persons who knew the due of every one, and too well inured to a large scale of life, to feel, or to make felt, any inconvenience. Those previously in the house, were not neglected for novelty or title: those who came last, found attention not engrossed. Lady Luxmore was not served with incense: her dependant was not looked on as the victim to be sacrificed. Not a word was said of 'flavors, cooks, or sauces:' not a question was asked Mr. Frankland where he got or how he got 'such famous good things.'—He named his wines, and begged, not that 'the ladies would take care of the gentlemen,' nor 'that his daughters would look after the young men,' but the attention of the gentlemen to the ladies; and conversation then proceeded, little interrupted by the dinner, and certainly not indebted to it for its topics.

The remaining day-light was improved by those who could use their limbs, in walking in the grounds or in quest of some object not far distant, while those to whom moving was less convenient, were equally well entertained in the house.

Gertrude was every moment more charmed with her new friends, and they, in return, admired what they kindly thought her good-nature in being pleased. Music, chess, of which, from Mr. Sterling's instructions, she just knew enough to be beaten at it, drawing, works of various kinds, books produced so as to gratify, not suffocate curiosity, anecdotes of the best species and authenticity, those observations on life and manners which seem the shrewdness of a moment, and are, in truth, the growth of half a century, all served to hasten away minutes which, of themselves, flew too fast, and brought, before she thought herself well-settled in her enjoyments, the hour of resting from them. Her regret might have robbed her of her sleep, had not Lord Luxmore, before the ladies retired, given way to the gentle persuasions of the family, to remain with them the next day.—‘Can you rise early?’ said modest Rachel to Gertrude, when wishing her good night: ‘if you can, my sisters and myself will be most happy to shew you any thing that can amuse you.’

Gertrude quitted her chamber at six, and finding her way down stairs, opened the door of a room, into which she was immediately invited by two of the ladies who were employed, the one in teaching a little boy to knit, the other in hearing a bigger girl read. Another almost instantly came

in search of her, and took her out into the grounds. ‘ Rachel and Maria,’ said she, ‘ are now occupied, so I shall have the pleasure of walking with you ; Rachel is teaching our littlegoose-boy to knit, because our father thinks it will prevent his learning to be idle in a lounging employment ; and Maria has no other hour in the day to give Mary Lee a lesson, because she, poor girl ! is wanted at home : she has lost her mother, and, young as she is, has the care of her father’s house and a family of little brothers and sisters.’

They walked to a cottage at one of the gates, where dwelt a woman who had the care of their poultry, and who baked the bread for the family : they then strolled through the hamlet, where every cottage seemed the concern of Gertrude’s companion : some were in better order than others ; and from the inhabitants of some, she met more encouraging returns of gratitude than from others ; In one, Gertrude saw a sad appearance of sloth and negligence : ‘ That woman,’ said Elizabeth Frankland, ‘ is on her good behaviour ; we are trying to make her do better, and we must not despair ; we must not content ourselves with pleasant objects ; for perhaps it is right that our patience should be tried ; and if we can rescue one fellow-creature from the love of dirt, we shall be repaid*.’

Gertrude

* A very humble estimation of our powers of interesting and amusing, has, many times in the *putting together* this farrago of a work, made our courage falter, and our heart sink ; but at the present moment, we feel a claim to every species of

Gertrude was careful to return by Lady Luxmore's hour of rising. Breakfast, that most cheerful

approbation, and even of gratitude, that a reader can bestow; for we have a proof of good sense, a deed of benevolence, a trait of heavenly charity, to bring forward, which it cannot often be possible to produce for example. A lady of our acquaintance, of a family whose delight is to do good, missed from her pew in her parish-church, several prayer-books, some of which, being of hereditary value, she was particularly unwilling to lose. She reasoned on the probable fate of these books, and concluded, that they must have been first stolen, and then converted into money, by pledging or selling them. The situation being a village, not obviously affording a receptacle for goods thus obtained, she farther concluded, that the nearest place containing a pawnbroker's shop, must be that where they were deposited: to this place she went, and instantly found her stolen property. As her own acumen had led her in the search, and the search was successful, some credit is due to her sagacity; but the claim made by her strong sense to our applause, is trifling in comparison with what we have to tell. On enquiry, she found that her books had been pawned by two abandoned young women, whom she traced to an abode of wretchedness, almost untenable by a human being, and where they were suffering every description of misery.—Having reason to hope that a life of vice was not their choice, she and her family rescued them from this den, and making the wages of sin needless, they maintained them in industry and good habits for more than two months, during which time, they secured, for one of them, the only vacancy in the Magdalen hospital: for the other, they sought employment, while they gave her every encouragement to do well; but, alas! in her, the contrary tendency was predominant, and after all that could be done by vigilance, admonition, and kindness, she was content to forego comfort and resume misery; and it would have been ideocy to force farther benefits where they were so ill understood. Of the Magdalen, they received the best reports from those

ful meal of the day! was here peculiarly chearful, in a south-room, opening on the lawn, not yet visited by the sun, and offering an elegant plenty, without that groaning load which now renders the first meal of the day, a formidable business of digestion.

To this, succeeded various morning-occupations. Gertrude was a little anxious as to the disposal of the countess, till she heard Mr. Frankland offer her a variety of plans which he would partake with

those who had the superintendence of her conduct; and when their hopes were the highest, that at the expiration of her seclusion, she would, with a recovered character, enter again on the world a useful member of society, they were compelled to dismiss her former partner in iniquity. But though disappointed, they were not provoked:—the obdurate girl quitted their roof and their protection; yet they suffered her to depart in peace, and their last words to her were,—‘and may they influence us all’ when we would plead the impossibility of not resenting ingratitude!’—You are going from those who would have been your friends, and who have assured you that you shall never want, while you deserve assistance: fed and clothed, you do not now feel your folly; but a time may and will come, when you will reflect on it; and in that case, remember that whenever you are seriously disposed to lead a better life, these doors are still open to you; and the same kindness that rescued you from the situation you were found in, shall be exercised again, if you give any hope of endeavoring to deserve it.’

We can make no comment on this little tale which would not ‘chill the scene.’ It must make its way to the heart, the conscience, the soul of every Christian; and with respect to the individuals whose example it recommends, we can say nothing that expresses our own feeling, but ‘Be of good cheer: trust that your alms and pious endeavors are gone up for a memorial before Him who will never fail to reward the sincere disciples of his Son.’

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her, while the young ones went on other excursions. Nothing proposed seemed exactly to meet her wishes; but she saved some trouble by carving for herself. She confest she had a great desire to see a large paved town a few miles off, which she had heard called 'London in miniature;' the shops, she was told, were 'quite equal to any in Cheapside,' and 'sometimes one met with bargains in such places.' Mrs. Hartley kindly offered her services in this homely plan, and thus set Mr. Frankland at liberty to drive the earl to Leith hill. Portargis attached himself to the two sons who had first received him, and with them took another circuit, while Gertrude was engaged, first to walk with one party of the ladies, and then to make a few calls with another.

Her first visit was to a rustic building, which she had passed unobserved in her previous walk; it was planted out from view, and had originally been an aviary; but the genius of the present family not being suited to the robbing birds of their greatest blessing, for the sake of looking at them, their receptacle had been turned into a girls' school, of which two of the ladies, by turns, took the superintendence. The methods pursued here, increased Gertrude's admiration of her friends: a firm gentle plan was adopted; and its success was evident. From this building, a path whose soil seemed formed from the needles of the firs with which a great extent was planted, led up a steep, made easy by the steps the roots of the trees afforded; it met that path by which she had entered
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the grounds on her arrival, crossing which, they descended a still sharper hill, all the way in sight of bold or interesting objects, and coming round to the house through a thicker and more variegated plantation.

Lady Luxmore had not yet returned: the ladies renewed their neatness; and Gertrude was taken a few miles round the neighborhood to make visits that afforded her the sight of persons of the pleasantest recommendations, and in which she was introduced, so as to participate the pleasure, without feeling that she was a stranger.

Some of the guests, the former day in the house, had departed. The dinner-table was smaller, the party still more drawn together, and all in the perfect enjoyment of what seemed their own peculiar happiness, without the exception even of the countess. Surely, thought Gertrude, in seeing her so very little like herself, a more liberal plan of living would be salutary to Lady Luxmore's mind:—there must be some merit in her mortification at home; for here she enjoys herself completely.—No, Gertrude; you are wrong; there is no merit in such renunciations on such principles; but Lady Luxmore is fitted to enjoy nothing but what she thinks she claims from others.'

The second evening passed, even more swiftly than the first: new subjects called out Gertrude's curiosity; she stored up all that she thought she could make productive, and took leave for the night, bitterly regretting that it was the last.

With

With still greater regret, did she, the next morning—after, breakfast punctual to the minute that suited the travellers, make her farewell-acknowledgments, and turn from the lovely lasses of Hilbury. She would have admired the uncommon beauty of the drive from the house,—but she was going from it.

‘I cannot tell how it was,’ said the viscount, when ‘at the end of the next stage, Hilbury and its inhabitants were spoken of; ‘but I never felt more perfectly at my ease, though I was afraid of every word I said. I would not for the world have done any thing to displease those sweet girls, the gentlemanly lads, or that delightful man the father, or even good Mrs. Hartley.—Lord, lord! what a world this would be, if all people were like them: one should wish never to quit it.’—‘One might be *fitter* to quit it.’ said Lord Luxmore with more than his usual gravity. ‘It’s fine judging,’ said the countess: ‘they say you should eat a peck of salt with people, before you know them.’

CHAPTER LVI.

Female-disputants. The journey terminated. An assiduous agent. Gentle admonition. Landscape of Brighton. The student and his studies. 'The Old Gentleman.' The student puzzled. Athenian morals. The student in favor. Resumed industry. Encouragement. A plan.

THE travellers were soon out of sight of Hilbury ; and Gertrude was at liberty to enjoy what she could see of the country, now that, by an improved disposition of the six band-boxes, they were piled up even with her chin, against the drawn-up glass, on the side where the prospects were the finest. Lady Luxmore's cough broke the peace; the weather had changed to comparative cold, and thence resulted an enquiry on her part, as to her share in 'the basket, left behind.'

Neither of her attendants could inform her of what she might find or miss at the end of the journey; and from this uncertainty sprang up a luxuriant crop of forebodings that, wanting the necessities of life, she should meet her death, instead of regaining health, at Brighton. As this bore hard on the performances of the damsels, and they were of characters very different, the rebukes were received with tears by the one, and taunts by the other; and Gertrude, without being able to shield her

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her patroness, had a proof of the ascendancy an ill temper in ourselves gives others over us. The countess, proud, haughty, disdainful, and in general fully able to return railing for difference of opinion, had now met with more than her match, and heard truths, which none but one extremely her inferior, would have dared to tell her. At times, she endeavored to regain the ground she had slipped from; but the attempt only drew down a fresh torrent of invective, almost amounting to abuse; and she was first compelled to desire that no more might be said on the subject, and then to try to bring the *poissarde* into better temper, lest she should, on reaching Brighton, carry into execution her muttered threat, that she might cook for herself when she got there, as 'she knew there were more places than parish-churches' by the sea-side, and she could, 'any day of the week,' get one more profitable than her ladyship's.

Gertrude's practical ignorance made her dread lest she should have to endure, in an aggravated degree, the effect of this unequal altercation; she thought that what had been already sufficiently disagreeable, would now become intolerable; but finding herself mistaken, and perceiving that, on the contrary, Lady Luxmore was, during the rest of the stage, more than commonly kind, that she moved two or three of the band-boxes, because 'it was not fair' to shut the country from her view, and offered even to have the second glass down, if Miss Aubrey found it too warm, she was taught this lesson, 'that there is, in the adjustments of this world, an even-handed

handed justice' which not only 'returns the poisoned chalice to our lips,' but which, in every day's events, makes us repay with the left hand, what we have seized with the right: we may play the tyrant to the meek; we may oppress the innocent; but the first stiff spirit we meet with, will subdue our's; and the coarse brutality of those whom we despise, shall avenge the injury we have done to those who claimed, at least, forbearance.

They reached Brighton in time for a late dinner, and were met at the door of the principal hotel by Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson, whom an intimation of the designs of the noble family had interested in procuring them an abode, and induced to remove from a neighboring watering-place, that he might be at hand to offer his services.

The viscount was no stranger to the place; it was within a morning's idleness of Abbé Bonfront's marine-university; and he and Sylvanus had enjoyed some frolics there which were sometimes incautiously alluded to in the progress of the conversation, but always suppressed by a look or a gesture from Portargis, when Gertrude looked grave. To neither the earl nor the countess was the place foreign land; to Gertrude it was novel, and, in all ways, strange.

A house on the Marine Parade had been secured by the assiduous Mr. Reynardson: it met the approbation of the countess, and could receive them in the evening.

Gertrude being ordered to precede those who could not walk, the viscount and Mr. Reynardson, quitted

quitted their wine to escort her; and when she had, with some difficulty, dismissed them, she prepared for the reception of her principals. It cost the viscount some stratagem to return for half an hour's conversation, before his father and mother could interrupt him; and he made use of the opportunity, notwithstanding it was little of Gertrude's attention that he could hope for, while she was engaged in unpacking and disposing of the baggage. By offering his services, and really being serviceable, he, however, edged in those commendations of his friend Sylvanus, which he hoped would efface any unfavorable impressions, and concluded his undertaking for his impeccability, by saying, when she appeared less ardent on the subject than he was, and when he perhaps began to suspect she had more prudence than himself, 'I don't say that Syl. is just the fellow you would most like: he may not please *you*, for you can know nothing of the world; and, indeed, I am as cautious as you can be, for I give you my honor, I never take his word in any thing, yet he's a monstrous good fellow, as any in the world, and he will be very useful to us, if he gets into Lady Luxmore's favor, for then you can go for a sail with us, and she can't growl. I shall tell her the French will take her if she stirs: as to my father, he can't jump about yet; and so I shall have you to myself; and then, oh! if a brisk wind would but carry us somewhere, where we might never hear another word of them, how happy should I be! Do you know, Gatty, I am very much altered?

tered? I am growing quite sedate: I think I should like a farm, or even to go into the church, so I could but live quietly with you; for most people are so silly;—but you are always chearful and good humored; and you have no affectation: I always see what you mean. Now I am subject to such horrid low spirits whenever I am not amused! and I am always being forced to be something I am not, except when I am with you. O! if we could but live like those people at Hilbury!—I shall dream of them. You do not know me, I am sure, or you would not treat me as you do. Put me in any other situation but this horrid one, of playing the hypocrite to my mother, watching my father, and trying I fear, in vain! to make you love me, and you will see what I am.’

‘It must be a very common error,’ said she, as she moved about, and he followed her, ‘to suppose we could do our duty better in any station than that allotted us: I doubt whether I am exempt from it myself; yet I think it is very wholesome to be placed where we have not too much choice of action; for I am afraid if our diligence depended on our voluntary exertions, it would be very imperfect.—But with regard to our delightful visit, which, I think, I shall never forget, I hope it has shewn you how respectable and chearful quiet decorum is, and how very elegantly the duty towards parents may be performed: you saw those young men were as respectful to their father as if they had been infants.’

Aye!—

‘Aye!—but then what a father!—It must be a pleasure to obey such a man.’

‘But think then, Portargis, of the superior credit of behaving well where it is less a pleasure.’

‘I should be ashamed of seeming dutiful to *my* father and mother.’

‘O! you silly boy!—what can be the shame? I do not wonder at a woman’s feeling ashamed of the respect she must pay to an undeserving husband; because he may have been her own choice; though even that does not exempt her in the least from her duty; but as we do not chuse our parents, we get praise instead of disgrace, let us humor them ever so much.’

‘This doctrine may suit you,’ concluded the viscount, ‘better than it can me; women were born to submit; but you do not know what becomes a young man, or how one should be looked on, if one were found sneaking to unreasonable people: one must have spirit. You cannot judge, —though I know you are generally in the right; and if you knew how I wish to be all I ought to be, which I know, as well as you can tell me, I am not, you would have confidence in me. Think of my disadvantages, and pity me; think what a father!—what a mother!’

This conversation lasted through the arrangement of the house, which was entered on as soon as possible: the evening was not favorable to marine pleasures, and Gertrude, not out of the reach of first impressions, rather inclined to an opinion she had heard, that the road to Brighton is far pleasanter

santer than the place. The woods of Surry had served to improve the form of the hills, and to give inexpressible richness to the landscape; she now saw only lines which, however beautifully they might fall, were still but lines, and of consequence always obvious: the smell of the sea, unfortunately, reached her olfactory powers, with a recollection of a room she had slept in, when fresh plastered; ships did not interest her affections; she wanted an oak-tree instead of a mast; and the sea seemed to her, in its character of calmness, and curled surface, a whole composed of small parts; its chafing disturbed her rest when she attempted to sleep; and as she stood by its edge, the next morning, its restless motion gave her the idea of a perturbed mind. She resolved to suspend her decision till a storm should have shewn it in its majesty; but not one occurred during her stay, that did not disappoint her expectation.

Of the 'terra firma,' though she was forced to confess the downs fine, she soon conceived a still less favorable opinion; neither cultivation nor spontaneous vegetation greeted her: hot sun, or wind that seemed only to bear about the heat of the sun, were the variations of the weather. The inhabitants or visitors, as far as her eye could judge, were still less to her taste; and though she was disposed to believe what Lord Portargis asserted, and his friend Reynardson hinted, that the fault was in herself, if she was not in love with Brighton, she did not find that the conviction, even
open

open as she was to it, at all abated her perceptions.

The world, it is said, would be intolerable without the interests of life ; an opinion to which every social temper will subscribe with the reservation of a certain power in Omnipotence of making the world just what He pleases, even without the requisites supposed, by his creatures, indispensibly necessary. But there is little fear of the failure of what is called *interest*, while every one has to take care of himself; and of that species of it which exists in the focus of self, no places are more productive than those where to admit no care, seems a part of their constitution.

No sooner were the earl and countess, by Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson's assiduity, comfortably fixed in their abode, than he looked round on each of the party, to judge how he might best conduct himself towards them, individually and collectively. The ideas with which he met them, were not quite correct: he expected that farther acquaintance, would prove Lord Luxmore a fool, who plumed himself on having been dignified by a public character, in which his part was written for him, and where there was neither disgrace to be incurred nor credit to be gained: and of Lady Luxmore he judged that she was of the lowest description of sordidness, and an incessant virago. Portargis, he thought he knew; and of Miss Aubrey, we have hinted, he had drawn in his fancy a whole-length figure of fine proportions; but still he was convinced,

vinced, that in encouraging her to throw off disguise and coquetry, with her lover's friend, he should find, at the bottom of her heart, the ordinary rubbish which, his experience told him, was to be found at the bottom of all female hearts: he concluded, therefore, that the tasks imposed on him by friendship, would be to blind the judgment of a weak father, and to stroke down the irritability of an untractable mother; and for all this, as it was no new demand on his ingenuity, he was prepared, while to the exertion he was stimulated by somewhat more than that substantial reason for wishing well to a friend's marriage, that 'it will make another house for us to dine at.' Hymen, he designed, should pay the debts of Cupid; and while he waited for a profitable stewardship of the Luxmore estates, he could content himself with the leakings of his friend's purse, and the use of his interest.

In one point he had been sadly mis-led, before he knew the earl personally, but a moment's use of his eyes, on his former *rencontre* with him, had set him right.

To the designations of a father, which were fashionable some years ago, such as 'Square-toes,' and 'Hunks' has succeeded the apparently more respectful title 'the Old Gentleman.' Lord Dwindle had led the way, soon after his establishment with Abbé Bonfront: it served to remind those about him, that he considered himself as the Apollo, and his father, as the Jupiter of his family-mythology; and when his diminutive lordship exhibited

his 'length of limb' furnished at the expence of his no-body, he certainly fancied he could refute, by styling his father 'the Old Gentleman,' the notion that he was himself scarcely entitled to be called 'the Young Gentleman.'

There are advantages and disadvantages attending all modes of education. One of the former, to be found in an establishment, conducted like Abbé Bonfront's, is, that if the boy of highest rank happen to be fool, a knave, or a blockhead, the rest have a good chance for being so; if his dispositions are of a higher order, he is considered as favored or skreened, and a coalition of hatred and envy is formed against him: there is, under the dominion of a servile teacher, no attention, by which his natural asperities may be rubbed off: there is no counterpoise of evils; there is no respect for general opinion; but the mind of every one becomes a stagnant pool of his own; and bad habits are hedged in by the scum of their own putrid fermentation.

If we may presume to suppose that any habit could be bad which 'that nice, that elegant, that interesting young man,' Lord Portargis had ever adopted; we should say, that of calling his father 'the Old Gentleman' was one: first, because his father had as yet no pretension to the title, and next as it was not meant to confer honor; but, be this as it may, the habit he had got, though with that power over it, which some *brave men* have over modes of speech still more exceptionable. He used scarcely any other form amongst 'his friends,'
but

but Gertrude had heard it only once : the indignant, the contemptuous reception she gave it; the ridicule with which she met it, were so fatal to the assumption, that his lordship thought her forbearance cheaply purchased by promising to offend no more. It was once said of a grave lawyer, that he had ‘ a local impudence :’ Portargis had a local modesty ; and not all the arguments brought against even this virtue of time and place,—not all the endeavors to persuade us that, in admitting this variation *for our sakes*, we make hypocrites, can convince us that to compel any one to behave decently for a quarter of an hour, is of no value : bad habits are at one period of their generation as rare as good ones : we see what opportunity does for them : pray, pray, let us give some small chance—all the chance in our power—to their opponents.

Mis-guided by the hint we have mentioned, and confirmed still more in his error by the certainty that Lady Luxmore was very far from young, Mr. Reynardson was, in his previous meeting with the earl, thrown out of his play, by perceiving that he afforded neither the hope of a speedy abdication of his possessions, nor any symptoms of an imbecile turn of life ; and the opportunity occurring now of farther acquaintance, rendered the matter more desperate ; for if nature had not made him singularly wise, experience had made him prudent ; and as he had no violent passions that could be laid hold on to guide him ; as he was subject to no starts of temper which obliged him to atone, by mean submissions, for as mean tyranny ;—as he had

none of that caprice which presents in rotation the offensive and defenceless parts of our characters; and as, when he was in any doubt, he often used the expression, 'I should be glad to do what is right,' Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson, in every interview, felt cast to a greater distance, and into more perplexity.

To his friend, the viscount, he found it in vain to look, even for directions how he might serve him; for there was evidently, in his conversations, a shyness of introducing Miss Aubrey's name; and she was too near at hand to venture to overleap the barrier, though it was a barrier, which resembling the chalk-circle that paralyses a frightened fowl, existed chiefly in the imagination.

But in Gertrude herself, he had met his most grievous disappointment: she realised none of the ideas he had imbibed from the viscount's first sketch of her: she was homely when compared to the Juno, the Venus, the Hebe, out of which he seemed to have compounded her: he heard none of those sentiments which accorded with the samples he had received, of wisdom and virtue, and their paramount 'good nature,' which those who need forbearance, make an anti-climax to prefer to them, for she said little spontaneously: he discovered none of those talents which Abbé Bonfront's 'Abregé de l'histoire de Athènes' for the use of his pupils, had enabled Portargis to transfer from Aspasia to his favorite: the Abbé had colored high, and had dwelt much on Aspasian influence: he had addressed the passions of 'his young men;' for
he

he treated of a period when the Areopagite prohibitions of false eloquence, had given way to the revenge and licentious tyranny of him who corrupted Athens; and he had secured their judgment by representing his '*liaisons des cœurs*' as the servants of their fortunes. The Abbé was not to be blamed for his methods: *they* merited the censure who made use of talents, which, unlike those we have seen turned to the best purposes in their own and this country, had served, on one side the water, the cause of anarchical despotism, and were imported hither to make slaves of the worst sort. He had none of that loyalty which makes our friend L—— sigh at the name of his country; he had made no sacrifices which needed the fortitude of J——. To get a daily subsistence had been his utmost view in France: to secure a yearly stipend was his enlarged ambition in England. Yet he affected to rank with the unfortunate, the expatriated, the despoiled, and called himself a sufferer in the misfortunes of his country.

Not deeply read, his fertile imagination had been his reliance, and wisely endeavoring to impart that of which he had the greater abundance, his pupils, when their feelings were excited, were sometimes incorrect in their recitals. Thus the viscount, in describing Gertrude, had dipt his pencil in the warm colors of his own pride and fancy; and in the hands of such an artist, she could not escape caricature.

In all his subsequent attempts to possess himself of some portion of her confidence, or to make
her

her betray herself into an obligation to his secrecy, Mr. Reynardson was so foiled, that he began to think he must turn his intentions, and instead of proffering his service to introduce the young couple to the temple of Hymen, must assist to bar them out; since every day of the first ten, had contributed facts or observations to convince him that the first hour of their union, would be the last of his influence in the house of Luxmore.

But Sylvanus was too wise to give up the game merely because he had lost his queen: he waited some bad move from his antagonist, and waited with that perfect command of temper which is too good a power to be monopolised by gamblers. Under all his doubts and anxieties, he yet saw a little undergrowth of smaller advantages, which he did not mean to sacrifice; and he continued his assiduities towards all the family, in the way most calculated to ingratiate himself with each.

Lord Luxmore, in the compass of this period, had often wished 'Portargis would take example by that admirable friend of his;' and the countess seemed to take pleasure in not differing from her husband. Though the viscount was more prudent than heretofore, he was not less attached to his friend, and Mr. Reynardson might have been well satisfied with the sentiments of every one, but of Gertrude, who not presuming to decide, but not prone to be dazzled, was not quite certain that she quite liked Mr. Reynardson: she could fix on nothing to object against, but his great civility, and the expression of his eyes; and consequently

quently to neither of these circumstances did she ever object.

It would not be new to our readers or particularly agreeable to our small stock of patience, to journalise the proceedings of a family at Brighton. Lord Luxmore lived, as far as his remaining lameness would allow, very much like other decent idle lords on the sea-coast: when at home, he gave a succession of audiences from the front-windows of the drawing-room, where he and his countess sat; and much of every day was spent in society, that did not disgrace him. The countess's connexions increased daily, by those hooks and eyes which persons of similar tastes carry about them; and Gertrude, who was not wanted in agreeable hours, was suffered to enjoy a dull back-drawing-room by herself, to which the viscount brought her whatever books she requested, and every thing that chance or his own knowledge of her taste enabled him to add to her pleasures: she attended Lady Luxmore in her short walks for exercise: she accompanied her airings when they had no object, and was with the family in the evening, if they were at home. She was, therefore, in no danger of being ruined, even by the dissipation of Brighton.

But comparing her life with former parts of it, she felt it ungrateful to complain. Could she have revived Mr. Sterling, she would have called herself happy; but his connection with all the operations of her mind, was too close; and she felt, occasionally, relief in the disturbance she endured

dured from the earl and his son, who chose to go out of the way a little, in their movements about the house, to make her sitting-room their path. The earl pleaded the uninterrupted surface of carpet: the viscount now first vowed vengeance on his cordwainer for the creaking of his boots.

In passing her table, both of them noticed her employments. Lord Luxmore was surprised at the success of an attempt to copy a little print in the room, and asked her if she would like to have the attendance of a master. He took up a book and found it a classic: she told him that Lord Portargis was so good as to give her half an hour when he could spare the time: his lordship laughing, requested that she would keep him up to this practice, as the only way to prevent his forgetting all he had learnt, and repeating his offer of a drawing-master, took on himself to procure Lady Luxmore's concurrence; but her ladyship saw 'no necessity' for it, and therefore it could not be. Portargis offered the battering-ram, where the procedure by sap had failed; but Gertrude prohibited all interference; and he had then no resource but telling his friend, Reynardson, 'what a brute' his mother had been.

Whatever compassion Sylvanus might feel for an oppressed girl, it did not, in this instance, abate his increasing dread of her elevation: he was not hard hearted; he felt the cruelty that was described to him, and he would have been happy to compensate for it to the sufferer, by any plan that would take her out of his way; and if this plan
could

could have included the rendering her, in any degree, obliged to him, it would have come with an additional recommendation to his promptitude; but what could he do, circumstanced as he was?

Rather should he have asked himself, what would he not do? spurred by increasing want, embarrassed by multiplying demands, and rendered desperate by the brutality of a vicious father, who, having not seen him since his infancy, had answered a frantic resolve to throw himself into his presence by an unfeeling prohibition, and a heavy curse.

Sylvanus seldom stirred without looking round him; and the complaint made to him by Portargis, gave him new food for thought. It convinced him that, if he meant to discard Gertrude as a useless or an untractable puppet in his drama, no direct means would answer the purpose: to detach Portargis he held very possible; but to snatch his object from him, would only make him grasp it more tenaciously. To smother Gertrude with benefits was more feasible, and might be as fatal; or if he made her a handsome way out of a station which he did not chuse her to occupy, his morality did not teach him he had much to answer for. She removed, he did not doubt he could place in her room, a successor, whose gratitude would requite him; but as he lived under some influence of female attraction, and was himself—though he did not brag of it—a father, something in his nature, or in his circumstances, bade him
soften,

soften, as they regarded another, those measures which he fancied his necessities made requisite to himself.

To *serve* Gertrude, therefore, was now his object; and as he durst not attempt it himself, to make a friend for her was the path he had to pursue: in the choice, he was not embarrassed; but having seen enough of Lady Luxmore, to be aware that nothing intended for the benefit of her *protégée*, could be effectual, unless addressed ostensibly to herself, he knew what he had to do, and decided on doing it without delay.

As a beginning, he took advantage of an increase in Lady Luxmore's indisposition, which confined her for a couple of days, to lament, that amongst all her acquaintance, she had not some one who was sufficiently at leisure for the gratifications of domestic friendship. Would her ladyship allow him to introduce to her an old friend and favorite of his, with whom he lived on the pleasantest terms?—He was well aware of the necessity of caution in an introduction to persons of distinction; but Lady Elna de Ruse's rank spoke for itself, and he was sure she would prove a most desirable addition to her ladyship's society: he knew she would be at the libraries in the evening; and if her ladyship was well enough to take Miss Aubrey's arm so far, he should be happy to bring them to a personal knowledge of each other.

CHAPTER LVII.

An agreeable introduction. A fascinating woman. An offered friendship. A serious discussion. A visitor to the Botanic garden. French frivolity. Means of subsistence. An averted scolding. Finessing to good purpose.

AT the library that evening, Lady Luxmore and Lady Elma de Ruse met, and were introduced to each other's friendship by that able negociator Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson. Gertrude was present; and at the first glance of Lady Elma, took her station in perfect quiescence in the back-ground.—There are claims which the meekest feel inclined to resist; there are rights in which the proudest and most presuming must concur; of the latter description were Lady Elma's titles to deference; but while they demanded respect, they inspired no fear; and Gertrude's step backward was, the next moment, encouraged into, at least, half a step forward.

In her ladyship's deportment were joined all those indications which serve as the inscriptions on virtues. To manners of the highest class, and the most finished elegance, were added a frankness so nearly allied to humility, that whatever distance her noble birth placed between her and an inferior, was in a few minutes forgotten, in the seeming necessity of giving her that self-opinion and confidence which were requisite to support her power
of

of pleasing. To every one, her behavior was measured so liberally by her quick perception of right, and her generous wish to do somewhat more, that all within the circle of her notice, were satisfied without being elated :—if they thought her polite, beyond the common bounds of politeness, it was accepted as what was granted, not as what might be demanded ; and she was praised for making the cordiality of her feelings triumph over, without diminishing, the *etiquette* of her rank. A disdain of flattery—the most flattering of all condescension ! avouched her sincerity ; and the brilliancy of her conversation and the playfulness of her gestures, while the one commanded applause, and the other promoted gay good humor, seized heads and hearts of all descriptions ; and the infinite variety of her powers produced an opinion, that delivered itself uniformly, wherever Lady Elma was thought on, in ‘ the tributary epithet *fascinating*.’

Under such a contrast, Gertrude would have known presently her extreme inferiority, had she ever presumed on comparing herself with others ; but removed, by the insularity of her own situation, from all competition, depressed into a conviction that she ‘ was nobody ;’ and having no ambition ‘ to be somebody,’ she was content to see *how it was*, in others, to be uncommonly agreeable. If she was, in this first conversation with Lady Elma, which Mr. Reynardson kept up with assiduous spirit, conscious that she could not speak as did Lady Elma, a pardonable degree of self-love, somewhat supported by truth, whispered to her that she had

not

not had similar advantages ; and certainly a noble extraction, an education in Paris, when Paris was the focus of the world, an honorable marriage with a man of rank in the army, whom anarchy drove with his wife into an exile that added, by great vicissitudes, to that she had to tell, had given to her powers a scope and a fund, not to be attained in the common routine of domestic life. Disdaining danger, despising complaint, submitting to her destiny, and making the best of it for herself and a husband, who was dying under the distresses of his country, she had fulfilled many painful duties, and nourished much virtue ;—but Lady Elma was born with a character :—she was ambitious and she was a coquet : and though the elegancies, the conveniences, or even the comforts of life, were not the immediate object of her grasp, to suffer nothing to interfere with her views, and to admit no one to share in the admiration she claimed, were points on which she egotised as tenaciously, as any the most avowedly covetous of this world's more palpable goods ; but not even her failings prevented her being, as long as she was a wife, exemplary in that character, when called on as a friend most zealous in her exertions, or when resorted to for consolation, or even for amusement, a woman the best adapted to these offices of society. When deprived of her husband indeed, she soon ceased from the irrationality of unavailing grief ;

‘ For ah ! no sighs the past recall,
No cries awake the dead.’

When

When friends no longer needed every strenuous application of thought, she sometimes forgot them. Those whom she had consoled with the tenderest sympathy, she did not always, in her private opinion, think worthy of it; and when ‘*pour se faire aimable*,’ peeped from behind the wings of the loves and graces, which played in her eyes and danced upon her forehead, those who are accustomed to ring their gold before they pocket it, were less prone, a second time, to set open the ivory portals of their affection. Yet with all these abatements, she added daily to her conquests; and if she lost links from one end of her chain, she gained them at the other. In her wandering widowed life, she left a name at all the many resorts of fashion and idleness, which, in the course of the year’s revolution, were her successive places of abode.

No one will have the smallest curiosity to know what was Lady Elma’s person: it is enough to say it was not bad: her countenance, every one will perceive, needed only fine eyes—these she had; and her mind, and her hand, did the rest for her beauty: her age was under thirty-five and above thirty, the most convenient of all periods of life for that sort of amphibious empire which, to descend to a vulgarity, makes ‘all fish that comes to net.’ When we have said that she dressed uncommonly well with a very slender purse, the reader understands *as perfectly as we do*, Lady Elma de Ruse.

Lady Luxmore proposed calling at Lady Elma’s *half-house*, the day following their meeting at the library; and in this visit Gertrude, as she had not
been

been introduced by the countess, was not disappointed in having no share ; but on the following morning, when on quitting her chamber, which looked against the back of a house she could nearly have reached with her hand, she came into the front-drawing-room in hopes of being pleased with the sea, her throwing up the sash made a lady look up, whom she immediately recognized, in her morning-dress, as Lady Elma de Ruse. With the most gracious affability, she invited her to walk ; and hesitation and excuses were over-ruled by intreaty.

With manners like Lady Elma's, and a sense of her condescension such as Gertrude felt, a few minutes sufficed to make the one seem to forget, and the other not wish to remember, that this was their first meeting. ' If I may trust you,' said her ladyship, ' you will save me a vast deal of *finessing* and trouble, both which I hate. I do not ask you if you can keep a secret—if you cannot, you put it out of my power to be of use to you,—She then revealed Mr. Reynardson's having bespoken her friendly interest for her. ' I hear,' said she, ' that Lady Luxmore has refused you the advantage of a drawing-master : '—she did not add, ' Mr. Reynardson is afraid Lord Portargis will marry you, and desires me to prevent it'—but she told her she knew the tyranny under which she lived :—she did not wish to comment on it—she would much rather assist to alleviate it. ' Conversation,' said she, ' embodies' evils, and fixes their existence ; let us rather try to make them vanish into air. I could, perhaps in a few days, by studying the characters of
your

your principals, and availing myself of their foibles, obtain for you the indulgence you have been refused ; but this is precarious, as I have my way to make with them. The shortest method, I believe, will be to profess myself your friend ; and this, if I understand your disposition rightly, I am most willing to be.’—‘ I am not rich,’ said she, ‘ very far otherwise ; but I have enough for my wants, and I have a very independent spirit.—I am, alas ! my own mistress ; and though I live a good deal in the world, I have a little time to spare, which I shall be happy to render serviceable to you, particularly as I *suppose*, your accomplishments are of importance to you.’

Lady Elma paused, but Gertrude, not perceiving it, or else having nothing, poor girl ! to say, she proceeded : ‘ I do not offer my services in the common language of the world : what they amount to, you will soon be able to judge : I mean strictly, that if you can make me useful, you need only say, ‘ Lady Elma, Do so—or so,’ and I shall say, ‘ Thank you, Miss Aubrey.’—But so far you and I must understand each other : I do not conceive myself at all qualified to finish the accomplishments of any one intended for the upper circles of life ; but I think I could aid an industrious girl who depended on her talents for any part of her subsistence. I have no right, neither I am sure have I any wish, to ask questions ; but, without being guilty of this rudeness, I shall have every satisfaction necessary to my proceedings, if you allow me to say that it is on the supposition that I am rightly informed, that I offer my small services.

Mr.

Mr. Reynardson tells me you are the daughter of a most respectable clergyman; that on his death Lady Luxmore took you from your mother, to educate and bring up as a *protégée*, as is the fashion now; that not having been educated herself, you have been denied many accomplishments you ought to have had; that you depend entirely on her; that her temper is very capricious; and that it is highly probable she may leave you to make your way in the world, without any provision.'

' 'Tis exactly my situation,' replied Gertrude, without hesitation or faltering.

' Well! then,' pursued Lady Elma, 'if you do not politely deceive me for the sake of making me of importance; if you have really no lover, no prospect of a connexion that may make me ashamed of intruding my benevolences on a fine lady; but if you really are a good little girl, who would be glad to improve her useful accomplishments, and has not all the means she deserves, I am at your service.'

' Indeed,' replied Gertrude, looking a little downwards, 'I have no dependence in this world but on my industry. I every day expect something to occur that may make Lady Luxmore wish me to quit her:—and my prospect is forlorn. I have a mother;—but she has unhappily offended Lady Luxmore; and I fear she will rather want my assistance than be able to afford me any.'

Mr. Reynardson now came up on horseback; he dismounted to walk with the ladies. Gertrude began to ask herself what she ought to do in ac-

knowledgment of the interest he had taken in her fortunes ; but Lady Elma settled the matter with promptitude, and reading her doubt in her looks, she whispered, as he dismounted, ‘ Not a word.’ She was obeyed, and a conversation ensued, which might or might not have a relation to the subject.

They strayed to a little distance from the houses. ‘ I am no friend,’ said Lady Elma, seeing a female-school taking their morning-walk on the downs, ‘ to the common mode in which the girls of this said Great Britain of your’s, are educated. Look at those miserable children, with their books at their noses—what can they gain by exercise, so fettered? and after all, what *do* they learn? Ask them, when they come home from the hot-houses where their little sickly talents have been drawn up, what abilities they bring with them : to what do they amount?—Scotch steps, Irish steps, French steps—and Heaven knows what steps—certainly stand first ; they will talk, perhaps, of history and geography, and languages and trigonometry, and probably of that science which that detestable wit Voltaire has so well ridiculed in his ‘ Jeannot et Colin,’ as ending in *on*, but which you call heraldry :—but what do your girls here, by which they could maintain themselves? unless, indeed, it be by imperfectly teaching what, I may say, they still more imperfectly know ; for after all, they understand nothing—they can only repeat. Now, under the old *regime* of France, women had, fortunately for them, more implements, if you will admit the expression, put into their hands ; and they had the power

power to be well-educated, if they chose it. The sources of knowledge were more open to them; and no woman was ever ashamed of being supposed to have resorted to them. I have often, I remember, when a girl, heard of ladies whose mornings were spent in transcribing from books in the king's library; and under the new form of government, this point is considered, and women have advantages equal with those offered to men of science.'

'You must give me leave,' said Mr. Reynardson, 'to differ from you, Lady Elma. I grant you that French women always possessed that advantage which arises from having what Florian calls *'toute sa tête.'* No question of powers or success, no doubt of a favorable reception ever disturbs them; therefore, as they can always shew what they attain, they must carry away applause from our females, who, content with 'submissive charms,' would forego all superiority rather than assert their claims to it. You certainly have an advantage over me, in having lived in France; but unless climate alters nature, not merely in the progeny but in the specific individual, I should suppose that the French women here, are what they were in their own country; and I protest I never saw a greater proportion of the vain, the arrogant, or the frivolous, than I have seen amongst them. I grant that no English woman has a chance against them, if each is to be seen but once; but what English woman would condescend to be judged by this ephemeral opinion? Their own country furnishes anecdotes in abundance that prove their freedom

from diffidence, and their reliance on their sex and their privileges; but I can judge only from that which I have seen here: and I own it does not captivate me:—I am persuaded that they exercise their power of pleasing as condescension; and the intrepidity with which they can bear to be wrong, is astounding to an English mind.—‘*N’importe*’ is a phrase that carries them a long way.’

‘But they learn it of the men,’ replied Lady Elma, ‘and with them it is ludicrously common. Colonel de Ruse was travelling post, with three horses abreast—the middle one a very tall one—the off-horse broke out of his harness and ran away—the postilion was not aware of it. The colonel called to him, ‘*Le cheval est parti*’—‘*N’importe*,’ he replied, and proceeded. But as to the *sang froid* of ignorance—do you not remember Mrs. Marlin’s going to the botanic garden at Chelsea, and complaining to me afterwards that I had mis-led her by saying the gardeners were attentive and ready to answer any question?—Perhaps you never heard the catastrophe of the business. I spoke to the gardener and recalled her to his memory, expressing my concern that she had not seen any of the new plants:—the man answered in his native northern accent, ‘And what could I shew to a lady who asked me if I had got any *Jererums*?’

‘Jererums?’ repeated Gertrude involuntarily.

‘You may well ask?’ said Lady Elma: ‘the woman meant Geraniums. Now such a thing is less pardonable in an English woman than in a Gaul,

Gaul, because, as you all are, in general, retired characters, at least the good among you—for I never consider myself as of the country—you are never obliged to come forward; and if there be any excuse for flippancy and volatility in the light air—O! the delightful, the ecstatic atmosphere of France!—which makes those born in it speak first and think afterwards, it can not be pleaded in your blue fog and oppressive humidity. But remember my argument was originally that your girls are not taught what would conduce to their resources under such calamities as France has endured.'

'There again I differ from you,' said Mr. Reynardson, 'As calamity gave *Louis* seize that fortitude and that character which he never possessed in happier days, so I conceive that personal distress gave your French favorites their powers of acquiring a subsistence.'

'Why you cannot suppose,' said Lady Elma laughing, 'that in seeing their houses plundered, and their relations murdered, they received lessons that taught them sciences and manufactures.'

'But, my dear creature,' said Reynardson, 'what is it they have done, which my countrywomen, even moderately educated, would not do, if called on? To consider the higher departments of exerted industry—have they done much in literature? or will you say that a French woman, I may say of the highest rank now in this country, can write, even a letter, that would not disgrace a sister of mine?—They have not built bridges or houses; they have not been carpenters or even turners; they have

done precisely what our young women, under the same circumstances, would do: they have employed their fingers in works of ingenuity, and they have taught elegant accomplishments—and if we suppose that none have presumed to teach, but those who had learnt well, it must be that either we have never put them to the test, or that we take for granted that, being French, they must be perfect. But I confess I see no reason for imagining that the country, taken in its collective capacity, has altered its national character. And he who said,

‘ All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,’

would, I believe, if he could rise from his grave, and be conveyed to Paris, see that Mesdames are only the feminines of his instance, and perhaps conclude, from the subjugation under which he would see the kingdom, that his second line was not written hastily. I like many of the French I meet with, extremely, on account of the vivacity of heirt talents, and the ready change they carry about them for the purposes of conversation; but their volatility always offends me. I have tried to serve some whom I have seen in the deepest distress:—I have taken pains for them; and perhaps the day after they have told me a tale of woe, enough to make one’s flesh creep, when I have sought them out to propose something which I had secured for their advantage, I have found their feelings and their views quite changed; and they have preferred some shifting plan of their own, or scarcely recollected mine. I have been dismissed with what *they* term *sang froid* and I call matchless impudence; and they
have

have come to me again, in three days, telling me their new projects were abandoned, and requiring me to detail, for their acceptance or rejection, what I had before taken all the pains in my power to make them comprehend and adopt. And now, Lady Elma, we must drop the subject; and I must wish you good morning—you will, I know, think of what I have said.'

Lady Elma nodded, as if she understood something not expressed, and shook hands with Mr. Reynardson: Gertrude took leave of him, with the conviction that she had done him the greatest injustice in the coolness of her approbation. As he spoke, she could not but observe the difference of his style towards Lady Elma and the countess. The former, a woman of whose superior powers she thought all must stand in awe, and for whom he had, in speaking of her, expressed the highest deference, he treated with a blunt familiarity, and contradicted without hesitation. To the latter, he had bowed in implicit acquiescence; she saw the inverted distinction and the compliment; and she hoped he might in time be *so good* as to contradict *her*. She was now satisfied that he must be one of 'the best young men the world,' though ill portrayed to her mind's eye by his friend Portargis, and she determined to join Lord Luxmøre in recommending it to the viscount to copy him. 'But first,' thought she, 'I will observe the countess.'—Prudent girl! remember that samples of character, like samples of broad cloth, are cut out of the best part and tell not the progress of the design.

and that he may be very capable of that holiday-virtue which is assumed and deposited, who cannot produce one wish unmarked by moral turpitude.

‘Notwithstanding what Reynardson says,’ said Lady Elma, resuming the conversation, when she had returned his last visible civility, ‘I think the manner in which the *émigrées* have supported themselves in this country, speaks equally in praise of their fortitude in bearing evil and their exertions to alleviate it. I question very much whether you or I, thrown on a foreign shore, could be as assisting to ourselves and our families, as the French have been.’

‘As I know nothing of the world,’ replied Gertrude, ‘I cannot judge of it in general; but I cannot conceive that your ladyship would be at a loss; and I often comfort myself with hoping that, whenever it may be necessary, I can get a living.’

‘And pray how would you set about it?’ asked Lady Elma, ‘What are your means?’

‘At present, they are but few. I can soon reckon them. As I can make all my clothes, and have taken pains to learn all the sorts of needlework I have ever seen done, I could try that plan: there is nothing mysterious in the trades of dress-making and millinery. I can plait straw; I could teach my own language, I am sure in a better way than girls are generally taught, because good Mr. Sterling, Lady Luxmore’s uncle, took pains with me. French and Italian are familiar to me, and I shall not rest till I understand Latin, and can
read

read German and Spanish. I can write, he used to tell me, as fast as a clerk in a public office; thanks to his constantly employing me! I can correct the press, for I have done it from ten years old. I can make an index; nay, now I am sure, you must laugh. I can break sugar, go on errands, keep accounts, and read aloud for hours together. I can make lace, write short-hand, and do such things.'

'What a collection of odd, out-of-the-way accomplishments!' exclaimed her ladyship: 'you must have many, beside these? what do you know of music?'—'Scarcely any thing.'

'And what can you do in painting or drawing?'

'Very little; but I think if I had a pencil and a card, I could draw that windmill; and as I was looking at the toys at the library yesterday, I could not forbear fancying I could soon do something like them;—and I can copy easy things.'

'You walk, I remark, uncommonly well. Could you teach dancing?'

'O! no; dancing has a fashion in it.'

'But I am sure, having lived, as I understand you do, in London, and educated by Lady Luxmore, you must have more accomplishments.'

'I can name nothing more, unless the knowledge I have got from books; and these, I dare say, are not such as fashionable people read; my little stock of learning is very obsolete; it is what Mr. Sterling thought best for me. I am very sorry I do not know more, since perhaps I am too ignorant for all, or any part, of your offered kindness to

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be of use to me; but I could perhaps learn something that you could point out: you will have the goodness to tell me, I dare say, what it would be most proper to attend to; for I do not know, except the things I have named, what ladies learn.'

'And pray, my dear,' asked Lady Elma laughing, 'what, beside what you have named, do you suppose *I* could suggest? of your reading, I judge by the style of your speaking; and I only wish I could express myself with half as much propriety.'

They had now reached the Marine Parade again; and Gertrude, charmed as she had been with Lady Elma's conversation and kindness, was not aware of the lateness of the hour, till seeing Portargis at the window, with his tea-cup in his hand, she was convinced she had outstaid the time of breakfast. The viscount ran down before she could enter the house, and said, after proper introductions between him and Lady Elma, 'You would not mind me, when I called after you, Gatty. My mother is in such a humor, that, unless you can stand it, you had better sham sick, and go to bed.'—'No, no,' replied Gertrude: then turning to Lady Elma, who had not yet quitted her, she took leave, saying, 'I must not stop; for indeed I am afraid I am too late. When may I hope to be allowed to see your ladyship again?'

'If you are too late,' replied Lady Elma, 'it must be *my* fault; so I must be your champion; I am bound in honor: allow me to follow you to your breakfast-party.'

Gertrude led towards the staircase. 'Now,' said

said Portargis, forgetting in his concern for Gertrude, his very slender acquaintance with Lady Elma, ‘you may hear what she will get by going in; my mother is, at this moment, in one of her most abominable humors: she cannot, I am sure, endure that any body should notice poor Gatty; and she will have it nicely.’ He held Lady Elma back; and she had heard as far as ‘Upon my word, Miss, if this is to be the consequence;—when ‘Hush, hush, hush,’ from a voice of a different tone, declared that the vote of censure did not pass ‘nemine contradicente.’ She advanced. Lady Luxmore rose; Lord Luxmore came forward, as fast as his obstructed gait allowed, and Lady Elma, with equal candor and gentleness, yet with a sort of attitude of mind that precluded altercation, said, ‘I fear I have committed a great trespass: detesting, as I do, walking alone,’ I drew Miss Aubrey away from her door, when I passed. I am sure that, but for me, she would not have quitted the Parade; there is nobody to blame but myself.’

‘O dear! I beg,’ said Lady Luxmore, ‘your ladyship would not think of it. Miss Aubrey knows she is always at liberty. I wish her, I’m sure, to be happy, and enjoy her friends; but as I say——

‘I know perfectly well, my dear Lady Luxmore, how necessary domestic attentions are; and I am certain Miss Aubrey knows, equally well, what is due to her best friends. The manner in which she has, I understand, been educated, will always teach her this; and, at the same time, it renders her company so desirable, that, as I am a poor forlorn widow—

'dow-woman,' said she, smiling, and raising her hands with a pretty appeal to feelings which she knew where to seek, 'you will, I am convinced, dear Lady Luxmore, let me have her, now and then, to walk—the men of this place,' said she, with a brilliant glance at the viscount, 'have no compassion on us matrons; and I may walk my heart out, before one will say, 'Take my arm.'

'Will not Lady Elma take her breakfast *here*?' said Lord Luxmore to the countess.'

'O! willingly and thankfully,' replied the new guest; 'for as I am very poor and very lazy, it will save my money and spare me trouble.'

All was now peace and cheerfulness. Lady Elma distributed her smiles and graces so liberally, that every one was captivated by her; and before she quitted the house, all ceremony between her and the family was abolished, and she had arranged a plan according perfectly with Mr. Reynardson's *interest* for Gertrude.—With great address, and the best-directed encomiums on all that she perceived had been done for Miss Aubrey, she professed her earnest wish to be allowed a share in contributing to the accomplishments of a young person so well trained:—'she was,' she said, 'as much as any one, an enemy to the profusion of lavishing a fortune on education; but she thought accomplishments, well bestowed and attained, were now equal to fortune; and as she had some to spare, which she practised every day, she should be very happy if Miss Aubrey could spend any part of her mornings with her, at her poor piece
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of a habitation, on the New Steine; and she was certain she would afford her a little assistance.'

Lady Luxmore would perhaps have interposed an objection, had not Lady Elma been prepared.—She was beginning, 'Why, I'm afraid, it's not in her power'—when her friend replied, 'You are very good, indeed: she goes home with me this very morning, to begin school; and if your ladyship wants her at airing-time, she shall be quite ready.'

The firmness of the pleader gave courage to the court; and Lord Luxmore, delighted that any body would do Gertrude such a kindness, and gratified that she would still more gratify his pride, at some little time hence, and Portargis, rejoiced at any thing that released poor Gatty, and thwarted his mother, both assisted to overpower objections. An undertaking was entered into, which the gentlemen jocosely guaranteed; and Lady Elma, having taken her slender breakfast, and dazzled the countess with prospects of great *introductions*, took her leave, and carried off Gertrude triumphant; but not suffering the viscount to escort them, though he urged his services with a view to erase his name from the list of *negligents*.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Kind counsel. The sensitive authoress. A first lesson. Telemachus and Minerva. The universal favorite. Latin studies. Inconsistencies of character. Portraits.

IT was impossible to conceal gratitude thus called out. 'Say not a word,' said Lady Elma in reply to Gertrude's thanks : ' I see your situation, and I feel for it.—I perceive you have indeed nothing to depend on, but yourself; for a married man with a cross wife is an awkward protector. Lady Luxmore's character is written on her forehead; and that sweet simpleton the young lord, any body may wind round their finger :—take my advice, rely on none of them. I have seen more of the world than you have. I am an old woman—you are a very *very* young one. My scheme for you is arranged; you need not tell me what you want. I shall take up no idea but that you had better look forward to the common lot of young women unprovided for. I know every atom of your history; and I know what it is to be poor; for my father had little to leave me, and if I had not married, I must have starved on a pension, which my pride would have made choke me. I could get a pension now; but I will not; it renders one so uninteresting, so odious! I remember when that brilliant creature, Charlotte Lefevre, interested every body

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in her sorrows, and Lehay, the poet, set on foot a subscription to console her under the miseries of a bad husband, a numerous family, and a severe pecuniary loss, a very clever young man of my acquaintance came up to me one evening in a party, and said, ‘O! I have been so disappointed to-day! I was going to get introduced to Charlotte Lefevre; and would you believe it? I hear she rides about the streets in a monstrous fine carriage that somebody has lent her.’—I asked if the loan of a carriage abated her interesting powers. I was answered, that if she was not poor and friendless, she could not be interesting. And by parity of reasoning, had I a pension, I should be instantly struck off ‘the compassionate list’ by all my acquaintance, if I were in ever so much misery.’

‘And did the Lady whom you mention, other-merit pity?’

‘Why as to her *merits*, I cannot indeed be responsible; she had great *powers*; and she had been unfortunate.’

‘Of what kind were her powers?’

‘Is it possible, my dear miss Aubrey, that you can ask? I thought all the world had read her works.’

‘I am sorry to be so ignorant. Will you have the goodness to tell me of what description they are?’

‘O! tales, novels, romances; and certainly her style of writing prose has never yet been equalled; and her powers of exciting the *sensibilities* were delightful.’

‘Had she great sensibility herself?’

‘O!

‘O! you wicked creature! how can you ask? If you are so astute, I shall not be able to deal with you; you will see through me presently: tell me why you doubt whether a writer capable of exciting sensibility, possesses it.’

‘If you will allow me to speak out, I will tell you, madam. Mr. Sterling, to whom I owe more than I can express, always endeavored to keep me on my guard against hasty conclusions, and especially against supposing what he called ‘the stage-action of life,’ its genuine feelings. I have been, on some occasions, inclined, almost obstinately, to believe that writers must be what they appear in their writings; and had I met them in the world, those who wrote the best moral sentiments, would have had the greatest share of my confidence. I was astonished and vexed when he told me what gross licentiousness, what selfish, what gluttonous waste of money, nay, what hard-heartedness, many of them had been guilty of; and when I was convinced that Burns, that artless child of nature, that poet of the mountain and the glen! could be, what in prose-language amounts to *a shocking bad husband*, I resolved never to suppose any connexion between ‘the say’ and ‘the do’ of writers. O! if I could tell you what that discovery cost me! I had, by good fortune, had the loan of the first edition of his poems: I could not buy the book, for I had no money; but I copied out ‘the Cotter’s Saturday Night,’ and all the things that struck me in reading; and because the Scots dialect was an impediment to me, I
interlined

interlined English words of tantamount import and similar measure ; and when I had done this, and thought I had paid due respect to a man who, with some foibles, was still a prodigy of humanity, as well as of genius, I found that he was one who could, without compunction, break a woman's heart, and over whom, neither reason nor religion had any influence !

‘ True, my dear Miss Aubrey ; and I like your feeling : but remember at the same time, that there are anomalies in human nature, who can hardly be thought amenable to the laws of society. — Let such examples teach us to be content and thankful—content with inferior talents, and thankful to be spared that worst of all temptation which proceeds from our own depravities. But with regard to Charlotte Lefevre, I must, in honor, confess, that you are, in some measure, justified in your suspicions. I knew her in France, whither she and her husband retreated, after having shared the folly of spending £200,000. By some compromise with his creditors, they got back to England, and settled about fifty miles from London ; and the anecdote I am going to tell you, I had from her apothecary, to whom she had, at the time I mention, written a letter, such as must interest the feelings of any one who had any. She called on him to consider the situation of a mother who expected every moment to see a darling girl snatched from her in convulsions ; she represented all her dependence as resting on him ; and she intreated him, with politeness and pathos, to set
VOL. III. s off,

off immediately on the receipt of her letter : it was ten at night, in the height of summer, when her special messenger arrived ; and the apothecary, who had a friend supping with him, instantly sent for a post-chaise, and set off ; he reached the place, with as little delay as possible ; but to his great surprise, not a creature could he make hear : the house-servants, the nurses, nay, this agonised mother, were all soundly asleep, and were to be roused, before he could get access to the child, who was still in the most alarming danger ; he staid to recover it, and promised to see it again in a few days. At the second visit, he saw that the poor little creature wanted only sea-bathing, but this as quickly as was convenient : on his mentioning it, this mother, who could so eloquently portray, on paper, all the feelings of a mother's bosom, replied by telling him, that 'as they were some miles from the sea, it must be deferred till the hay-harvest was over, till which time they had but two carriage-horses to use ; and she could not think of going to a bathing-place without four.' — 'And now,' added Lady Elma, 'walk into my habitation, I wish I could say cottage.'

How was Gertrude delighted, when she found that Lady Elma's kind plan was to forward her in music and drawing ! her ladyship was *au fait* in both the arts she so kindly wished to communicate : she had a good instrument and a succession of music which her taste always selected from the works of the best masters. She copied drawings

with taste: she sketched objects; she colored from nature, and she knew how to inform, in the simplest and best way.

The first essay brought Gertrude very comfortable encouragement; and it was enlivened by pauses of conversation connected with her labors, and forwarding her in them. The pupil was called away, when she supposed she had been one hour employed, and had really been three. But she had nothing to fear; for Lady Elma attended the countess in the airing, and afterwards dined with the family.

Mr. Reynardson made a sixth at table; and he and his co-adjutrix were elaborate in their offices: the one invited the countess to take wine, and filled her glass, as he supposed she would wish: the other took the viscount as her charge, and distinguished him, in a way to which few young men are insensible. With a view that requires no explanation, she styled him her 'Telemachus;' and he, without the least violence to his pride or independence, followed the lead of his father, in bespeaking the counsels of such an unveiled Minerva. She introduced him, in the evening, at one of the houses 'of first reception' in the place; and in the course of the amusements there, took an opportunity of speaking praise of all those of the dinner-party, whose characters would at all bear her out in it: she said much of Gertrude; and looking under his eye-lids, she advised him 'to pin his heart fast to his back-bone,' if he was to

live under the same roof, with that delightful ingenuous girl.

But the very hint put his lordship on his guard; and recollecting Gatty's displeasure on hearing she had been mentioned as the object of his passion, to his confidential friend, he dared not risk erring again, where there was so slender an acquaintance: he therefore, almost for the first time in his life, was prudent: he referred to his prospect of entering into the army in a very short time, and with assumed negligence, protested, that 'upon his honor it was time enough for him, ten years hence, to think of a tiresome wife and a parcel of squalling brats.' Had he said less than this, perhaps he might have gained more perfect credit.

To the earl, Lady Elma addressed herself, as occasion served, in a different way: he could not yet walk out, but he took the air, sometimes, by driving himself, and was drawn to the libraries or the Steine, in a Bath-chair. By crossing him in her walks, and accepting a conveyance home, or by attending him at the side of his chair, she gained opportunities of conversation, which soon produced a certain degree of confidence on his part, and, in a few days, rendered him so unguarded, as to confess the irksomeness of his domestic situation, and all but his distant hopes and private intentions.

What can a woman of upright principle and common sense, say, in reply to such communication?
she

she has no resource but to laugh at it ; for discussion would make it too serious to be listened to ; and the question, ‘ Why did you marry thus ? ’ has no answer but ‘ Because I was a fool.’ Lady Elma met all these wailings with the commiseration of ‘ Poor soul ! ’ ‘ hard indeed ! ’ and pitying him, or affecting to do so, for his unfortunate mistake in wedlock, she repaid him for whatever violence he had offered to his conscience in exposing his wife, by hinting to him what cause he had to rejoice in the amiable qualities of a young woman, whose affectionate attentions he was at liberty to accept and cultivate, as freely as if she were his daughter. She expatiated liberally on what she found Gertrude ;—for there could be no visible danger in doing so ;—and certainly if Lord Luxmore was not aware that his lady’s *protegée* was a very good, steady, sensible young woman—for all *those* qualities Lady Elma could spare her ;—it was not the fault of her champion.

In the mean time, Gertrude’s joys went on increasing ; and the insuppressible evidences of jealousy in Lord Portargis, who grudged the occupation of hours, which certainly, however vacant, would not have been bestowed on *him*, served no other purpose than that of strengthening his attachment. Lady Elma had unhesitatingly asked, and easily obtained, the hire of an instrument for Gertrude ; and, in the same manner, she procured for her, whatever was necessary to the ostensible purpose

pose of fortuning a girl, by a few pounds bestowed on a frugal education.

While engaged at Lady Elma's, the viscount seldom intruded on her time, and when occupied at home, she put by his personalities, by trying to interest him in a plan of diligence. This gentle rudeness was too rational, too laudable to give offence: he grew happy in seeing her so, and became emulous of a share in making her so. She had not yet reached the sounding-place in his classic acquirements. Ovid's 'Epistles' had been a favorite classic at the Abbé's; and Virgil and Horace were more fixed in his lordship's memory, than Livy or Tacitus; this branch, therefore, of her learning, proceeded with as much vigor and success as her other pursuits; and a great obligation she felt herself incurring, as, for the purpose of giving her a lesson, his lordship, who was not the very best husband of his many idle hours, often kept his horses, his groom, and his friends, in expectation of him; but had she awaited the *regularity* of his proceedings, she could have learnt nothing but patience.

Lady Elma was still in the perfect possession of Gertrude's highest opinion: nothing had called forth her ambition; nothing had betrayed her coquetry; all that she enforced by words, Gertrude supposed a part of her practice; and commending her pupil for sedate qualities, her pupil imagined that sedate qualities ranked the highest in her estimation.

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To those who have experienced the exquisite pain of being obliged to lower the sails of a pursuing admiration, it is a matter of just thankfulness when they are saved the sight of deteriorating qualities. This preservation of her comfort, Gertrude owed, in some measure, to her exclusion from general society. In all her kindness, Lady Elma never proposed associating her young friend with herself, in any gay amusement : her motive for forbearing was not obvious, as she was frequently at a loss for a companion suited to her necessities, and was not cautiously silent on the subject. Portargis attended her assiduously, charmed by her mode of introduction, and made of importance by that attached to her character ; and the changeable turn of her manners could give him no other sensation than that of pride in his seeming influence over them : but had Gertrude been present, *she* could have experienced no such pride ; and she must have seen how much, how very much, of what so claimed her respectful affection, was, at least, suspended, while the too eager avidity of approbation, and the prescriptive necessity of sustaining the first part in a company, absorbed the better faculties of her mind, and rendered her the actor in a paltry drama. Gertrude would, in her ignorance of human nature, have wondered—she would, in her short perceptions and hasty promptitude of decision, have lamented such miserable inconsistency, without recollecting that human nature is a miracle, and that its prominent characteristic is the want of agreement with itself.

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She would have been unreasonably discouraged : she would have supposed there could be no wisdom where there was any folly ; and she would have feared a contaminating quality in foible which belongs only to vice : she would have taken these faults for the basis, not the alloy of the mind's constitution : her confidence would have sunk ; and her satisfaction would have followed it. Happy, therefore, was her exclusion from scenes of emulation ! happy were her humble views !

With Gertrude, we regret most sincerely the sad admixture of great and little, which every day's observation forces on our perception. Why will some of our friends expose us to the pain of contradiction when we speak of them as those whom we should delight to imitate ? Why are the same persons angels of mercy in the acceptance of one party, and a nest of serpents in that of another ? but because, for want of care and conduct, the alloy of their character is suffered to amount almost to character itself. Who could see Lady Grace Oxymel performing those offices for a pauper which our self-love shrinks from, even when demanded by our relatives, and believe her the same creature wearing out the patience of a worthy husband by the most provoking ill-temper, and neglecting all those gentle arts of peace which should make her home attractive to her family ? Why must she taunt at an infirm parent, in the same hour when she has prayed with the dying ?—and why do the whole house of Actwell—persons,
who

who for the world would not omit a duty, or wilfully cominit a sin; why do they use the most profane exclamations, combined and compounded with a sort of taste and selection, that makes the vice and folly of 'taking God's name in vain,' more peculiarly their own.

There are some errors of inconsistency, which we are persuaded, would give way to the slightest reprehension; nay, perhaps, to less than reprehension, to the mere holding up to our view.—Under this head, we flatter ourselves, come those which shew themselves by our changing the duties assigned us, for those which we like better, and which leave our friends the comforting hope, that 'though, to be sure, we have horrid bad tempers, we have good hearts.' Were we not determined to avoid being serious, we might say that few things are more provoking than the seeing 'uncommonly agreeable' in company, or 'uncommonly benevolent' to those who have no claim on them, persons who are 'uncommonly disagreeable' at home, and 'uncommonly malevolent' in their own natural or assigned circuit of action.—'How delightful Sir Harry was last evening!' said Mrs. Plume to Lady Shamwell: 'we wished you of our party; he was all anecdote and repartee, all life and fun: Lord! you are a happy woman to have such a man for your husband!'—Lady Shamwell has too much good sense to do more than bow, in reply to such observations, or she might have said, that, for no cause that she could discover, but because her child is a girl, Sir Harry had not spoken kindly to her

her for the last six weeks. When Mrs. Ayno is open to all applications for that sort of slippery charity which consists in parting from money ; when she deposits it in the hands of persons of whom she knows little, to be distributed to those of whom she knows nothing, we cannot call her munificent or even benevolent ; she abridges her children of every indulgence, and by her want of liberality, hinders their rising in the world. The still beautiful and ever gay Mrs. Tristram, is to be seen in all places of desolation. She is sent for, by her friends and clients, at the same time with the physician, and always before the undertaker. She will sit up with the sick, be it friend or stranger, to the injury of her health : she will wear out her carriage-wheels in collecting alms, or bespeaking mourning : she knows every fit application to grief in all its stages ; and were the world always in sickness and sorrow, Mrs. Tristram would be always an example of virtue ; but ask not her daughter how the intervals are filled up.—In hearing of Mrs. Strictly we are delighted with an excellent plan of family-management, pursued with admirable steadiness, and the best effects ; but Mrs. Strictly has no heart ; she feels for no one ; she welcomes no one ; she cares not what pain she gives.—‘ Tell me not of her domestic excellence,’ —says her neighbor Mrs. Facile, who, is wasting her income on the unworthy.—Mrs. Strictly’s words would condemn her in any one’s estimation, but that the manner of them is so much more odious, that

that our attention is called off from the matter of them*.

If, as has been often asserted, consistency is the test of good sense, where do these persons rank in the scale of rational beings? Would they not be, in all ways, gainers, if they performed the tasks allotted them? Is any choice or commutation of duties allowed us? or is it probable that such halting or capricious virtue can be either well founded or well supported?

It is endless to pursue the subject. A very profitable volume might be copied, as our work is copied, from real life; for there is no need of *composition* for either: it might efficaciously exemplify the inconsistencies of those who are too good to have a right to be inconsistent: it might lead us all to ask how far we are free from the error.—But *we* must return to Lady Elina de Ruse, whose faults of this kind, at the present time, did not visibly affect the great or the good qualities of her mind. She always talked well; she generally acted well; and no one's opinions, on points where her own province of attraction was not encroached on, could be more decidedly right or better enforced:—and as it is the vicissitude of seasons

* It is a matter of fact, that a medical man of eminence in London, fifty years ago, and whose wife had been surprised on her knees, imploring forgiveness for having ordered two-penny-worth of parsley without his permission, would cheerfully be wet through in a hard rain, rather than detain his horses, whom he spoke of as 'Poor lambs!' and this care arose really from sympathy, not from modern considerations.
which

which contributes to the growth and perfection of the strongest plants, so was the mind of Gertrude indebted to the good-humored ethics of Lady Elma, as she had been to the severer moral under which she was reared, and still was to those lessons which Lady Luxmore, even in her best estate, compelled her daily 'to learn by heart.'

CHAPTER LIX.

Frank avowals, and peculiar tastes. The right honorable sisters. A plebeian baronet. Individual feelings. The projected villa. The oppression of ill manners. An ill-judged remedy. A point-blank catechising. Effrontery disconcerted. The apology. All well again.

‘You delight me,’ said Lady Elma to Gertrude, in a walk, a few mornings after the commencement of their friendly habits: ‘you delight me by your energy and your powers of application: you are a happy girl; for you have been well trained: you never waste time, and you never lounge, are as capable of intense study instantly after dinner, as before breakfast; you seem to me, never to be sleepy: you have not had time to get idle habits; and you never appear to think of yourself. Now, I confess, though I do not call myself idle, I must have my indulgencies: after dinner, I want a little repose and conversation; for, if I read, I grow drowsy; and without society in an evening, I should be lost:—I must have my tea:—I like a snuff-box; and I never wish to do any one thing after I am dressed for the day, but flirt with the agreeable men of my acquaintance; for if I go into public, I confess this is the attraction with me; and the opera would be no opera to me, if I had only the stage for my object.’

‘Such ideas,’ replied Gertrude, ‘suit your station in life, but would be very unfit for mine.’

‘Tis a sensible distinction,’ said her ladyship, ‘and I am glad you make it; because then you will acquit me where I am sometimes inclined to blame myself. Situation certainly makes a great difference; for instance, your reserve is very commendable; but it would not suit me. I know it has been recommended as modesty and humility; but the professors or the admirers of these virtues, do not often come in my way:—I like a retired character more for the effect it produces:—it lessens responsibility; and it is certainly better to leave the world to suppose us very wise and very easy under our wisdom, than to convince them that we are very conceited, and very conscious of our own learning; but I dare say, I need not tell you, that I like to please:—if it be a foible, it is the foible of the finest country under Heaven; the country from which, not even all I have endured there, can alienate my affections. But, in my wish to please, I never brought forward any thing that could touch the self-love of others. I profess nothing but a resolution to be happy, and a wish to see others so. As to real learning, I might perhaps have gained some; but what Swift says is, I believe, very true, that in Latin and Greek, a boy in the lowest form of a school, will exceed our highest attainments. Nature has made me quick of apprehension; so that I shuffle through the world very well with the little knowledge I have, very thankful for the protection of petticoats, and
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the licence they give me to be superficial. If I have not always time to read as much as I wish, I resort to the Reviews, and they furnish me with what is wanted for the slight purposes of conversation. When I am in town, I get all the advantages I can, to keep my faculties from rusting: I attend the Royal Institution, where one hears of all the new discoveries, and the improvements in science: I have friends and connections who are subscribers to every thing; and, in short, the world is my book; and a very entertaining one it is, and I question whether it be not the best we can read.'

'I should have thought,' replied Gertrude, 'that it was necessary to read a great deal, to gain any knowledge of the world.'

'Far from it,' said Lady Elma: 'it is copying from a copy.'

'O! no,' returned Gertrude;—'but I beg your pardon.'

'O! speak out,' said Lady Elma; 'I shall have hopes of my ghost, if I can make it speak.'

'I am shocked at my own presumption, dear Lady Elma; but as I have gone so far, I will say it appears to me, that books translate the world into language better suited to our comprehension; the head you have drawn from a bust, I can, perhaps, in a little time, copy from your drawing; but I could not from nature, or from a cast.'

'True, but books, I think, are less faithful copies than the pencil makes; and of necessity, they must be so in history, when motives cannot be investigated: one proof you will discover of the feebleness

feebleness of verbal description, when you are as old as I am : you will see how far short of your own feelings all the interests of the stage, the most exquisite touches of the *comédie larmoyante*, nay, the pathos of tragedy itself, falls, of what you witness in the world. Some exceptions must be made for the first magnitude of genius ; but, in general, I protest a tragedy or a comedy bears little more proportion, in my opinion, to reality, than ‘ Chrononhotonthologos,’ or ‘ the Dragon of Wantley.’ A good farce is a good thing ; and I am vulgar enough to enjoy it ; but the seats ache most intolerably, when I sit out a play ; and I feel it is because my mind suggests to me much more than is offered to my eye or my ear. I own myself a fastidious judge ; for that which can be most accurately represented on the stage, strong-featured distress, I abhor. I cannot endure the seeing madness personified : it is too serious to be made our amusement. Thunder, lightning, and conflagrations, and, in short, all the trimmings of tragedy, make me shut my eyes and stop my ears ; but perhaps this is constitutional or the consequence of suffering. A sensible old man of my acquaintance was importuned by his grand-daughter to go with a party to a tragedy ; and he replied, ‘ No, thank you, my dear child ; at sixty-five we have seen too much of it.’

Two young ladies of a distinguished appearance, and who, by their joy and surprise at meeting Lady Elma, shewed she was their friend, and
that

that they were newly arrived at Brighton, now joined them. Gertrude resigned her ladyship's arm which was taken by the youngest, without ceremony or acknowledgment. Gertrude would have fancied she was not perceived, if the lady who had displaced her, had not eyed her, from head to foot, with her glass, and contemplated her, as if wishing to ascertain her rank and pretensions.

It was now hardly possible to recognise Lady Elma as the being she had appeared but a quarter of an hour before. Who danced with Lady Slippery, who the Miss Myops quizzed at the races, what regiments were in what places, who Captain Longshanks flirted with, and who it was thought that Colonel Sabretasch looked at, were the subjects of discussion, during which the two ladies seemed to have a peculiar aptitude to contradicting each other. Part of the conversation passed in whispers, and, on the side of the youngest lady, under the *piano* of her folded parasol, which she held before her mouth. Gertrude kept aloof, and regretted their loitering pace, which made the distance to the Marine Parade seem doubly long:—she knew not that she might depart.

A gentleman passed: Lady Elma saluted him with 'Fine morning, Sir Philip.'

'Good morning, good morning: 'how are you?' so I see you drive with an outrigger.'

All laughed, but Gertrude; why they laughed she could not conceive; nor why the eyes and

glasses of the young ladies were directed to her.

Sir Philip, as if claiming a share in the glory of his own wit, now joined and turned with them, and added his vulgar broad stare to the more fashionable inspection of the ladies. Introductions that operated instantaneously, like a year's intimacy, set all at ease but Gertrude, to whom they did not extend; they, however, told her that the ladies were lady Paula and lady Caroline de Hautefort, and the gentleman, Sir Philip Lorimer.

The bulky baronet, with as little scruple as Lady Caroline had manifested in displacing Gertrude, edged himself into the place Lady Paula had occupied: she retreated towards her sister; and Gertrude heard her whisper—‘That’s he that drives those fine bays; that they say is so immensely rich: I am determined.’ But though Gertrude heard, and though Gertrude certainly was no stranger to the language in which these words were spoken, they did not convey to her the idea that the lady meant to say, ‘This is the man to whom, with scarcely any knowledge of him, but what the silly newspapers force on me, I determine to give myself in marriage, and commit my happiness, my conduct, and my estimation:’—Gertrude would have been surprised, at that time, to know that ladies take for husbands, men whom they would not take for coachmen or butlers*; and so she

* The importance of marriages in the fate of states and kingdoms, and the symptom of decay which they exhibit, when

she would have been at hearing that a woman, whom the legislature has pronounced an adultress, can gain admission into the society of respectable persons ; but both are facts occurring every day ; and we lavish our civilities, nay, our expressions of fondness, on men deserving nothing but contempt, and women, whose conduct, to use the strong

when the moral sense seems lost in contracting them, render it matter of serious concern to see the frequency, now amongst us, of such as cannot be justified. In France, before the revolution, a sad sign of want of principle in the higher classes, was the avidity with which young women, for the sake of wealth and splendor, sacrificed themselves to men co-eval with their grand-fathers ; and it is fact, that a young bride-elect when complimented on her good fortune in having attached a man of seventy-three, spoke of her sister as still more fortunate in having married a man five years older. A few years ago, English women might have expressed horror at such unions ; but alas ! the warning is becoming an example. Long since, we have been persuaded that decency of conduct is no recommendation in a young lover ; but now we see girls of eighteen, emulous of the tenderesses of veterans of the bottle ; and sorry are we to add, that family-character, a virtuous education, and all those circumstances that make a young woman responsible for the discretion of her conduct, have given way, in some instances, to the fascinations of the grand climacteric, disgraced by the lowest vices : avowed atheism, the most gripping avarice, the most wretched parsimony, the most scandalous systems of illicit connexion, added to slovenly old age, have not been able to shake the prepossession of those who, in their neighbor's affairs, could judge better ; and mothers have not blushed to receive the congratulations of their friends, and to express satisfaction in such a disposal of a daughter, as would make the following her herse comparative happiness.

expression of a friend who will not yield to a corrupt fashion, makes one almost 'expect the earth to open at their feet *.' In this instance, there was much to be said. Sir Philip was the immense son of a knighted soap-boiler, in the eastern extremity of the town: he was, to be sure, *un-sober*, occasionally for six weeks together; he had been a little unfortunate at play; he had paid ten-thousand pounds damages for a frolic; but he had bought a title, was rich and ignorant; consequently the woman he married must be an envied creature.

When the effects of Sir Philip's wit, still unintelligibly distressing to Gertrude, had subsided, he in rather a guardian-like tone, questioned Lady Elma on his having seen her in conversation with 'that riff-raff fellow' Reynardson. 'I wonder,' said he, 'my dear soul, how you can commit yourself so; you really seem to have quite a passion for that low fellow. Now, I never speak to him; he's just nobody; he's quite menial; his father, to my knowledge, never owns him; he should do *that*,

* 'I confess I love winter,' said a very respectable aged matron, in our hearing, in a large party, and in her own house, to the divorced and infamous countess of ———. 'O! you horrible creature! replied she, 'how can you be so preposterous? we *must* quarrel if you are fond of winter; for I hate it.' 'I hope not,' answered our matron: 'you and I, I should hope, can never quarrel: I should be sorry even to differ from you in opinion.'———Was there any need of this profession of faith and fondness? and was it not insulting to those not so pre-eminently distinguished as this coarse sinner?

if he would have men of style and fashion, and what not, notice him: he ought to do *that* or the fellow's dished for ever.——'

But it was that very obliquity of Sylvanus's birth, that made him an object of interest to Lady Elma, who, seldom looking beyond her individual feeling, and not regarding the claims of the world at large, had deemed the prejudice against persons so circumstanced, unjust, and encouraged her friend Syl. to make head against the nature of things. She never spoke of him but with the compassionate preface of 'Poor fellow!' and assuming that her rank and popularity gave her the power to protect, she did all she could, on all occasions, to set him at ease in society. It was a proof of her benevolence; but she saw not that she was assisting to remove one of those beacons which warn the inexperienced from the coast of vice. She presumed that she could not err when she did as *she* would wish others should do by her, in the same circumstances; but she did not consider that it is a rule which does not accommodate itself to the waywardness of our personal convenience, and that it can never apply, when it includes injury, of any dimensions, however circumscribed or extended. She, indeed, did not use the same arguments to all persons. When, in any of her own standing in the world, a little aristocratic pride, or a feeling of nice heraldry, bore hard on Sylvanus, she would give up the question of right or wrong, and only say, with her best graces, 'Come, come; the sins of the fathers are not now to be visited on the children;

children. Poor Syl! I do pity that young man; and I am always in fear he should perceive I pity him.'

To those who considered their family as the pure focus of dignity, she made all those concessions and apologies for poor Syl, that could recommend his cause to their benignity; but to Sir Philip Lorimer, who, as she said, out of his hearing, 'tried to hold fast by his soapy honors,' she now shewed no mercy. She argued with him, in a playful way, on upstart pride and aboriginal meanness: she pointed out fashionable degradations of manners, voluntarily adopted, as far more entitled to derision, than circumstances of birth. 'Would we not all,' said she, 'be noble and rich, and wise, and beautiful? We surely have the same perception of these endowments as those who censure us for the want of them. Did we deny their worth, we should merit whipping; but, Sir Philip, you may just as reasonably despise me because I am very poor, as poor Syl, because he is illegitimate: Syl would get rid of the *bâton* in his escutcheon; and I would free myself from the bar in my purse. O! yes, I see you are going to make a civil speech, my dear Sir: you are on the very threshold of the temple of flattery: do not enter, I beseech you; it contains nothing that I have not fitted on and worn out, years ago. I know perfectly well that all the cruelty of fortune is but the foil of my perfections. I know the world would not bear the luminosities of my charms, were they not adumbrated by the parasol of my poverty. Come, come;

come; do not ransack your brains, poor soul! the Venus de Medicis, the Sappho of Lesbos, Helen of Troy, and Agrippina herself, to say nothing of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, have striven for a comparison with me for these hundred years: O! don't look so distressed now, good dear Sir Philip; or I shall most certainly tell you how to be of more consequence than my poor friend Syl. For Heaven's sake, take care: you are going to be fierce; and then I *must* run away: pray, pray stay, good dear man, till you are mounted on your coach-box, before you think of *looking down* on us all.'

'O! Lady Elma!' cried Lady Paula. 'O, fie! Lady Elma!—indeed, you are too severe. If I were Sir Philip——.'

'Hold your tongue,' said Lady Caroline, in a lower voice; 'let us hear what the fool has to say: did you ever see such a wretch?' I will not have you speak to him, Lady Paula; such a beast!

'What's that? what's that?' asked Sir Philip, looking on the ground as if he had mislaid his understanding.—No one satisfied the poor man.

Lady Elma could say with a grace, Lady Elma could do with a grace, what no one else could say or do without offending. She owed something to her rank, much to her talents, but still more to the involuntary respect which, to the last ages of the world, mankind will pay to truth, even dressed in a goat's skin;—and whenever her use of her great powers had reached the quick of human vanity, she

she would extend her well-formed hand, and nicely-rounded arm, in token of reconciliation; and who could refuse the olive-branch thus offered?

As if condescending to efface unpleasant impressions, she now noticed a very neat roll of paper, tied with green ribbon, which the baronet held in his hand, and said,—‘What have you got there, Sir Philip? something curious I dare say: have you been buying prints or drawings?’

‘O! no; neither of them sort of things,’ said he: ‘it’s only a bit of a rough sketch as I ordered my argeteck to scribble out for me; and it’s come down by the mail; and I want to see a very clever fellow I met yesterday, and talked to about my building. You shall see it, if you please. Here’s twenty guineas’ worth.’

The roll of paper, which had hitherto been a trunchcon was now unfurled into a flag: the ladies were desired to hold corners; and Sir Philip lectured.

‘This here, you must understand, is for my place, by Couster; it’s not for my town-house.’

‘*Couster?*’ said Lady Elma; in what county?’

‘Why, don’t you know? why Essex, to be sure; why, it’s the county-town, and sends two members of parliament; and I intend, between you and I and the post, to be one; and it has two market-days in a week, Wednesday and Saturday, and sixteen churches: O! it’s a famous town; if you don’t know the *town*, don’t you remember the *high-street*? it’s a famous place; as good shops as any in Lonnon: plate-glass, I assure you’s all the go there, and plenty of money. I was born in it,
just

just at the top of the north-hill, in a house with green shutters to it; don't you remember *that*?'

'No,' said Lady Elma, with perfect composure; 'I do not recollect ever having been at Colchester.'

'Ah! Colchester *you* call it:—it looks as if you wasn't used to it. We all call it Couster for shortness, because we know it so well.'

'But pray,' said her ladyship, 'let us proceed with your building: is that to be *in* Couster?'

'O! yes;—for I say a man who means to cut a figure, or do a great stroke, should always go where he's known. O! how the natives will stare! But it is not *in* Couster; it's just before you enter; just about a hundred yards on this side the first windmill; beyond Lexden: and now look at the plan. I intend to put the house no great way from the road; it's a cursed thing, in my opinion, when one's friends come to dine with one, for e'im to find at one's gate that they've got but half-way; beside, when a man's house is his own, as I say, what signifies all that scriggling and scraggling to get at it? none of your zigzags, Mr. Argeteck for me, says I; fair and flush for my money; so, you see, the plan, as it now stands, is to have the house just to face you, as you drive up; and we mean to give it a *cordone*, as I believe they call it, all round it.'

'Of planting, I presume,' said Lady Elma.

'O, no! bless your soul! much you know of the matter!—what would planting be good for, child? No, no, a *cordone* of the offices, and my stable-establishment, which I mean to have in a
very

very high style ; the stables and coach-houses, and all belonging to e'm, is to be on the plan of that old fellow's alms-houses as was buried in St. Helen's, with the key of his grave in his hand : you see there ; there's a place with a *doom* ; that's the chapel, at the upper end.'

'What a chapel in the stable, Sir Philip?

'O, no ! no ! my dear child ; but in the alms-houses that's the chapel : no ; I mean that chapel to be in my plan a equestrian hall with pictures. Do you know I'm having all the fifteen portraits of those fifteen horses as that fellow rode t'other day, ninety miles in four hours done, to hang up there ; have you been to see e'm ? you never saw such rum quizzes in your life ; well, you'll see e'm all at Lorimer-hall, when you do me the honor of a visit,' concluded the baronet, politely taking off his hat, and letting his corner of his property fall in the mean time.

Wicked Lady Elma thought of the stage-effect of the same action in *Comus* ; but she stuck to the baronet and the subject, and made herself understand that a monstrous parallelogram was to be assigned to this famous stable-establishment, one side of which was to house horses, to be bought, the other carriages, to be built ; while the rest of the *cordon* was to keep, close in sight of the mansion, all those appendages of it, which eating and washing require, and which most people put out of the line of vision : the dairy, larder, and coal-house, the wood-stack, and the cow-houses, took, with the man of taste, the place of plantations
which

which, as he justly observed, would be worth nothing till he was rotting in his grave, and flower-gardens, which were good for nothing but to look at: and nobody could be so cruel as to object, especially when he produced a very elaborate design for a Gothic gate, which was at once to unite the ends of this *cordon*, keep out beggars, and afford a point-blank view of Lorimer-hall, to all the stage-coach passengers.

‘ You will lay out a large sum of money, Sir Philip,’ said Lady Elma.

‘ O yes! a thousand or two; such things is not to be done for half a crown, child; but that’s nothing to the purpose. I’ll find money and taste; only let e’m do as I bid e’m.’

‘ I suppose,’ said her ladyship, ‘ there is a *Lady Lorimer’s* taste concerned in all this.’

‘ Not there,’ said he, indignantly: ‘ do you think I’d suffer my mother, and be —— to her, to interfere in my property now? she’s had her swing long enough; making my father stop my being of age till five and twenty; I was all that, thank goodness, as I always say, last grass; and now I’ll do as I like.’

‘ But I see no kennel to your house,’ said Lady Elma, ‘ I should have thought your field-sports would have come forward in the picture.’

‘ Picture? why this is no picture, my dear soul; it’s a plan; Lord love your foolish head!—but, as I was saying, I don’t have no kennel; I don’t ride; it don’t agree with me; it shakes me so confoundedly, you see; I like nothing but driving; and that
I shall,

I shall, in grand style, at my other house: my town-house will be a much famouser thing.'

'And where is it to be?' said Lady Elma.

'Why somewhere about Bayswater, or Paddington, just for the sake of driving into town and back, and the park. And I intend to have my bedroom fitted up in my own taste. I don't want none of your fine bed-rooms, and beds, and cupolo's, not I; give me a bit of a snug thing to lie down on, and then I'll have the rest of the room my own way; one side I shall fit up with a monstrous clever kind of a sort of a rack for my driving-whips; the other will hold my uniform of the club I belong to in town; and the rest I shall fill up with capital pictures of favorite horses.'

'Do you mean to have no pictures in your house but of horses?'

'O yes! I intend to build a picture-gallery, just for some Vandykes, as a very clever fellow has agreed to paint for me—and for such sort of lollolly—and a library and a billiard-room. I have been buying the caricatures for the billiard-room; it has cost me 200*l.* for 'em, all framed and glazed.'

'Have you bought your books?' Lady Elma asked him.

'O! no, no; I shan't trouble myself about them. I shall tell my bookseller to send me every thing.'

Lady Elma ceased speaking: Sir Philip took his leave; and the conversation now proceeded, in minute enquiries from Lady Pacula, concerning this 'uncommonly good-tempered man.' Lady Elma answered, as if wishing either to atone for having led

led him on in his folly, or to get rid of the disgrace of her seeming intimacy, by recording the many 'good points' in his character. Lady Caroline was not to be propitiated: in the most unqualified terms she declared her thorough abhorrence of the creature, and hoped she should never meet him again. This slight thwarting turned Lady Elma's attention to Gertrude, whose look, directed to the ground, and whose pensive countenance expressing something she could not quite understand, she tried, by now making her of consequence, and introducing her, to repair any injury her cheerfulness might have sustained. But the staring, the thorough ill-manners she had undergone, and the consciousness that she had been made ridiculous in an unintelligible language, had, however she was proof against the vexations of the world, embarrassed her; and it was not in the power of even Lady Elma's blandishments, to put her immediately in good humor with herself.

There is certainly some little difference, at times, between *high* manners and *polite* manners, if the latter consist in making those around us, and particularly those beneath us, feel at ease. Lady Elma was a model of the highest breeding; and in situations where others would have been to seek, she knew perfectly what ought to be done, and could inform others who had had lessons in the arts of deportment; she was one of those who form manners and lead fashions; but she certainly had been, this morning, deficient in that good breeding which would have set her young friend in a favorable

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ble light; and more than once it has been our lot to witness the inconsiderate galling which those who are called models of politeness will inflict on others whom it answers no end to please. Politeness, like all other virtues, must have a deeper root than is manifest, to be always in a state for use; and we can give no credit to that which flourishes only under certain climates, atmospheres, and circumstances.

Lady Elma made another attempt: she talked of Miss Aubrey's attainments, her application—she wished all her young friends would imitate her; but finding this rather increased than abated her confusion, she added, 'this is my young friend's marine *début*, and I must take care of her, or I shall have some great people very angry, and, amongst the rest, Lord Portargis, whom you raved about, Caroline, in your last letter.'

Gertrude was for a moment scarcely able to stand. Lady Caroline whispered to her sister, behind Lady Elma. Lady Paula then iterated, 'What? is Lord Portargis here? I say, Lady Elma, is Portargis here?'

It required one plunge to get out of the quicksand into which Gertrude was sinking; and recollecting herself, and what was due to herself, she answered for Lady Elma, who seemed to doubt whether another dose could be administered safely, 'I can inform your ladyship: Lord Portargis is here?' 'What? do *you* know him?' 'Yes, madam.' 'Have you known him long? what a nice young man he is! he is, I think, the best-tem-

pered creature I ever saw'—were questions and observations put and made, at the same moment, by the sisters, and too rapidly to need replies.

'Lord! Lady Elma,' said Lady Paula, 'do you know he has been talked of for that great heiress Miss Turberville Dickie; did you ever know any thing so ridiculous?' 'What a shocking thing,' said Lady Caroline, 'for that *poor* girl to be obliged to add her uncle's name to her own!' 'And her husband must take it!' said Lady Paula. 'Ah! that makes it more likely her friends will try for a man of rank,' added Lady Caroline; 'but the children must all be Dickies; and we shall have the Lady Dickies, or the honourable Miss Dickies. Do you know Miss Dickie?'

'The question addressed itself to Gertrude, by Lady Caroline's full stare at her; and she replied in the negative. 'Is Lord Portargis as handsome as ever?' asked her ladyship.' 'He is thought so.' 'You know him *very well*? can you tell how old he is?' 'Not quite of age.' 'Are you intimate with him?'

It was impossible for Gertrude not to smile, as she replied, 'O! yes, very intimate.' 'Do you visit his family?' 'I came hither with Lady Luxmore.' 'What? do you live near them in the country?' 'I live *with* Lady Luxmore.' 'Live with her? how? are you related to her? is she your guardian? but I should suppose you are more than one and twenty, by your manners.'

Gertrude paused; and Lady Caroline looked, open-mouthed, ready to catch her reply. 'I live,' said

said Gertrude, not at all receding from her self-command, '*with* Lady Luxmore, because I have no other home—my father was a clergyman, and had the living of Luxmore; he died, and left me destitute. Lady Luxmore has brought me up; and I live with her while she pleases I should: this is the whole of my history, madam.'

Lady Caroline was a little confounded at having nothing more to ask. She quitted Gertrude, and crossed towards her sister and Lady Elma, who had withdrawn a little, and were in deep conversation. The ladies took leave; and Gertrude resumed her place.

The short distance, at which they now were, from Lord Luxmore's, would have afforded just time to wonder how Lady Elma could be in the same hour so rational and so frivolous, had not her ladyship bestowed it in a compliment to her companion. 'Those foolish girls,' said she, make one foolish; but they serve to remind me, in my own case, of the injustice of judging of any one from the society they may be seen in. If you had never seen me, but with these silly creatures, who are, I assure you, very much like half the world they live in, you must have set me down, and I am sure you would have done it, for a rattling giggling quizzing creature; but I hope you will not be so cruel; for, with *you*, it is impossible not to be what one would always desire to be.'

Poor Gertrude was as much astonished, as if she had been told she had the power of stilling the ocean, which was lashing the beach below: she
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did not, at first, comprehend the civility ; but finding that it was intended for praise, she accepted it as kindness, and felt grateful for the consolation.

‘ I cannot,’ said Lady Elma, ‘ pulling back, as they approached the door, where they were to part, ‘ I cannot endure you to think ill of me, though I feel I deserve it. I must explain, even if it be to my cost ; for I never have the least scruple in owning myself wrong ; ingenuousness always keeps the triumph in our own hands ; and those who stoop, save themselves many a blow. I certainly was guilty of an error. In the joy of seeing those girls, who are really very good creatures, though I know they behaved a little high to you, I forgot you. I saw you did not understand them ; and really to make them civil to you, I did, I believe, a very foolish thing—in—in naming your connections.’

‘ I can have no objection,’ replied Gertrude mildly, ‘ to the naming my connections ; and as to my dependent situation, I would have every one who knows me, aware of it. I only wish to avoid having my name joined to that of Lord Portargis : were it ever to come to the knowledge of Lord or Lady Luxmore, I should inevitably be turned out of their house ; and as to Lord Portargis himself, though, having been brought up in some measure together, he is so kind as to appear interested about me, he certainly ought to resent such a use of his kindness ; and I could not blame him for withdrawing it : if his mother had had a hired companion, I cannot suppose she would have been sub-

ject to this inconvenience ; and what difference is there between such a situation and mine?’

‘ You are perfectly right, my dear young friend,’ replied her ladyship with tenderness. ‘ I am charmed with your propriety and ingenuousness, and your freedom from prepossession. Lord Portargis certainly ought to look high ; beside he is much too frivolous, I’m sure, to please you ; and you are quite right in your caution : you may depend on my care in future.

Gertrude’s serenity was restored : Lady Elma walked home with her, and diffused, for half the morning, the influence of her good humor through the party.

CHAPTER LX.

Family-comfort. All in danger. An improved man. Parental kindness. Farewell to the world. True esteem. Sincere grief. Pious offices. Resignation.

THE countess had found her congenial element, and an occupation for all her powers of enjoyment; and Gertrude reaped the advantage of the agreeable change. Her ladyship did all that she saw others do, either for health or pleasure; and as, in both these pursuits, she found companions much better suited to her taste than Gertrude, whom she described to her new friends, as insipid and low-spirited, her dependent was, in a very short time, left more at liberty than ever; and enjoying all the privileges of contempt and neglect, she had leisure to follow her inclinations, and, had she been so disposed, to recommend herself to the favor of the husband and to cultivate the passion of the son; but somehow or other, notwithstanding the countess's very humble opinion of the good qualities of her *protégée*, she never had the smallest real anxiety about the propriety of her conduct. Whether it was that she trusted to the harmlessness of her attractions, or to the integrity of her character, we will not decide; but had Lord Luxmore, or the viscount, proposed a journey with her 'solus cum sola,' Lady Luxmore would perhaps have ex-

pressed nothing beyond the sentiment, 'Much good may it do them, with such a dull companion as Miss.'

It is very convenient to be odious: it is particularly convenient, as our friend Mrs. Britton used to say, to have reached that time of life when we can walk the length of a street without the necessity of protection or the fear of insult; but more particularly convenient is it to be beneath all suspicion, where suspicion might deprive us of our daily bread—and this was just the beatitude of Gertrude Aubrey.

Yet she was of use: her progress in what she was attaining, interested Lord Luxmore, and prevented his feeling the slowness of his recovery. The books which she read, engaged him to read; and to be able to converse on what he had read, was a power that raised him in his own estimation, and gave a stimulus to his studies: his taste, though not deep, was not corrupt; and as her light reading was French memoir, that which was to her agreeable and useful relaxation, was to him study not too severe. 'I like your books of amusement,' said he to her; 'they are far better than works of fiction; they give history and biography in the pleasantest form; and one has not to reproach one's self with an entire waste of time; you must keep me supplied, Miss Aubrey, with these books; and I shall come out quite a chronicle.'

Over the viscount she used a little more, but equally harmless, influence: he seemed desirous to recall all he had gained under Mr. Sydenham, and

to improve on it: he shewed that much was in his power, with less exertion by far than attainment cost Gertrude; but he had no application; soon wearied, soon discouraged, and ending all his fits of industry with a question of its utility, he improved his faculties almost against his will, and sought counteracting idleness at the moment when his endeavors might have repaid him. The time had stolen away when he ought to have been fitted for his profession; and that was stealing away when he ought to have been entering on it. That high confidence in what is called, most arbitrarily and unintelligibly, 'the chapter of accidents,' which, on principle, leaves all to be begun at the time when it should be finished; and that *penchant* towards Gertrude, which made his plan of life always uncertain, kept him totally idle as to the world; while the hints thrown out by the earl, as he was not used to *enforce* his opinions, gave no disquiet to his enjoyments.

Lady Elma was the principal puppet-mover, and was ably supported by Mr. Reynardson, who dispelled the clouds, whenever they gathered on the countess's brow, his fair co-adjutrix keeping up Lord Luxmore's satisfaction with himself on the conclusion of his fortieth year, by shewing him as worthy of her attention as his son. Scouting Portargis's increasing disposition to lounge at home, she made him flee at the sight of her: she turned him over to the men of her acquaintance; and, by her knowledge of the world, doing something visibly tending to fit him for it, she accom-
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plished that influence over the party, which no two could feel alike, but each agreed to take as a distinction. Standing thus high by birth, connexions, talents, and manners, admired by all the men, and accommodating to all the women; too judicious to make any one her enemy, and too prudent to leave any thing to be said of her, which she had not already said of herself, the fashion and favorite of the first class of society, it was no small advantage to obtain her regard, and no small credit to Miss Aubrey to be seen as her companion, while on the part of Gertrude, her kindness was returned by gratitude for the peace she enjoyed at home, the increase of knowledge she offered her, and the great improvement perceptible in the general deportment of the viscount. Afflicted with no jealousy, relying on no powers or pretensions, but studious of his good, she rejoiced in seeing his increasing intimacy with Lady Elma, notwithstanding her unsparing reprehension of his faults; and all Gertrude's advice to him tended to make him, except on one subject, confidential with his admirable tutoress. The earl's acknowledgments were added to Gertrude's: his son was now, to his moderate expectations, all he could wish him; and he felt obliged in not being compelled to exercise the duties of a father.

This harmonious situation of domestic affairs had lasted three weeks, and had stood the test of some bad weather, when the earl was attacked with an illness, of a nature so alarming as to leave little hope of his life. Gertrude was again his nurse
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and comfort; and when ostensibly released by the rotation of attendance, she still superintended the vigilance of others: he would scarcely allow her to be out of his sight; and kindly or prudently recommending it to the countess to take care of her health, and to be out as much as possible, he removed in a great measure the impediment to his being gratified—for Lady Luxmore did not disobey him.

The circumstances of this illness were totally different from those of his previous accident: he was the first to perceive his danger, and the least affected by it: he wrote, himself, to Mr. Sydenham, asking his presence: he talked now of the world as not worth anxiety, of its troubles, its trials, its conflicts, as too severe; and giving up his concerns in this life, he had no objection to hear of another. Such is the happy effect of even *beginning* to do right, that a habit, not three months old, gave him a degree of peace and satisfaction he had never before felt; and as his lordship's tenets were not either very deep or very dejecting, he reasonably comforted himself that, having evinced his sincerity to his own conviction, it was not to be imputed to him, that he was hindered from proceeding. Nothing indeed could have been more correct than his conduct; every week made some improvement in it; and Gertrude had begun to flatter herself, that on his next visit to his seat in the country, he would set an example, in concurrence with all Mr. Sydenham's wishes and plans.

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Not to respect that which is respectable, requires a worse head and heart than had fallen to the lot of Portargis : his attention to his father was such as did honor to both ; and misunderstanding the earl's request to him, to think of his ease and health, as really what it appeared, the very urgency made him serve Gertrude the most effectually, by inducing him to share her attendance.

Lady Elma and Mr. Reynardson were deficient in nothing that could alleviate anxiety or remove obstacles. Seeing that Lady Luxmore could not contribute, in any way, to the comfort of her husband, they made her's their care ; and though their feelings were very different, as the one wished the earl to recover, and the other only thought of seeing him handsomely out of his way to the more profitable friendship of his successor, the admirable course of this world's government so controlled their wills and actions, that they served not their own purposes, but those demanded by the occasion.

It is not all laudable conduct that will bear the excessive refining that has been, of late, introduced amongst us ;—nay, God knows, with regard to our very selves, we can say we feel it difficult to refer to an action, however specious in the eye of the world, however honorably acquitted by a jury of friends, which will bear that analytical scrutinising which it is easy to demand of our neighbors, and difficult to exercise in our own case. Anxious as we are to get at truth, most humbly desirous as we are
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to do our best ; and disposed, as we pray we may always be, to acknowledge that, on our *own* endeavors, there can be no reliance, we confess it dejects, it teazes, it discourages us, to be told, not only that all our attempts at goodness are imperfect, but that the very endeavor leads us only the more astray ; and we cannot but fear that the example may be followed, of a lady whom we heard invited to a Sunday dinner-party, with some doubt whether engagements on that day were agreeable to her, and who replied, ‘ O ! yes ; we will certainly wait on you ; for, I assure you, we do not profess ourselves at all strict.’ We do not wish to defend bad motives ; we recollect that we are to argue from the fruit to the root ; but we do not perceive in the Gospel that ‘ small patterned’ moral, which modern writers make it so hopeless to copy.—A habit of acting well, will, through God’s assistance, give a habit of acting on right principles ; and when we commend the improved conduct of our party, we conceive ourselves to encourage, even feeble attempts, much more judiciously, than if we disparaged them by probing their sources.—’Tis very true, Lord Luxmore was resigned, because he was thwarted ; his son was dutiful, because he was not vexed ; Lady Elma was assiduous, because she had formed an agreeable connection ; and Mr. Reynardson assisted, because he thought the call on him would soon cease ; but all, except the last, were improvable persons.

The apathy with which medicine is sometimes practised, in places resorted to for the *chance* of recovery,

covery, may be excused by the natural tendency of wear to make bodies smooth; but to the honor of a liberal profession, we must say, that, even in such polishing situations, we have seen a very small power of interesting produce the effect. We have been amused by the 'baked meats' and the *frolic* of a funeral at a watering-place; and we have been shocked at the joke of tossing a little boy into the herse, as if it had been a hay-cart, to scramble out as he could; but a hard heart is not the common accompaniment of an enlightened mind, and, in the present instance, the earl was told, not with 'pomp and circumstance,' but with the feeling of a fellow-creature, the regret of abilities exerted in vain, and the caution of a friend, that the effort to save him must be made by Nature; and that as her aid was not to be relied on, dispatch in the arrangement of his affairs, and an exertion of fortitude to meet that which, however common, is peculiar, were called for, by the species and state of his disease. He received the tidings with a dignified submission, and a composure that argued his sense of the importance of the news, and his resignation to the sentence: he desired it might be communicated to his family in the gentlest terms, and that he might be left alone for an hour; at the end of which time he summoned Gertrude *only*, to his bed-side.

She had heard the confirmation of what, before, had been surmise counteracted by hope, with the deepest feeling of this world's unstable comforts, and the increased certainty, that He who can do nothing in vain, must have rewards in store for those

those who have even endeavored to obey him. She dried her tears—they gushed anew. She *commanded* them to stop; and she obeyed Lord Luxmore's summons.

If the earl's manners told any thing, it was the satisfaction of having, if he did love, loved neither unworthily as to his object, nor culpably as to the species of his affection: he seemed to thank her for being what he could, even in this moment, wish to see: his style was, 'My friend,' 'My child;' and Gertrude was, on the edge of both worlds, a choice not to be repented of.

She indeed could excite no affection that was corrupt in its principle: whatever influence she had, must, under the control of her probity, be, at least, innocent. Gertrude Aubrey was not born or gifted for the '*amando perdere*:' the dissolute would have shrunk from her: the dissipated would have avoided her: she bore about her, none of those fascinations that require the cautions necessary in carrying phosphorus: the regards she excited, were of a higher kind:—all might not like her; but they who once had liked, loved and esteemed her: she had not that three years' lease of a heavenly complexion, which renders one and twenty a formidable climacteric: her mind and heart formed her countenance; and till their nature varied, Gertrude must retain all the advantages, whatever they were, that she was born with.

Under the dominion of a partiality which, in other circumstances, would have done him honor, and which certainly, even now, did not add to the number of his follies, Lord Luxmore had grown a
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better man. Gertrude was to him a next-door conscience; and though there was none of that confidence between them, that informed her of her importance, she flattered herself, that by contributing to render him chearful, she assisted in keeping peace: her good conduct was its own reward; and as she took Lady Luxmore's perversenesses for the copper which makes our coin current, she was, the moment before her happiness was put in jeopardy, perhaps happier than ever she had been.

To all the privations and fatigue demanded of her, she submitted, little sensible that she made any sacrifice. Lady Elma called daily; and she saw her for a few minutes; but no attempt could Gertrude make, or feel inclined to make, towards abstracting her mind from the awful scene before her. Lord Luxmore himself talked to her of his desperate situation; and, gratified by her reluctance to acquiesce in it, he shewed fortitude in endeavoring to prepare her for the event. 'I am so much happier,' said he, 'than in my former illness; I have such a satisfaction, even in having resolved as I have done, that I only regret I am prevented from doing what I intended; and I feel no sorrow but in leaving Portargis and you. You have been an inestimable friend to me; and I should be an ungrateful wretch if I were not now anxious for your future fate.—I wish you had not dropt your correspondence with Sydenham: I was very wrong; but you can easily explain it, and lay the blame on me. As to remaining with Lady Luxmore or not, you will be guided by your own
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good sense. I have no wish, but for your happiness ; and if Portargis turns out deserving of you, be assured I can have no objection to his marrying you : he ought, indeed, to marry for rank : but it is a trifling consideration, when compared to domestic happiness.—*I* failed, in marrying for money ;—*he* may do as ill, in marrying for any other worldly consideration.'

These were Lord Luxmore's expressions to her, when alone with him. It was only occasionally, that the viscount sat for half an hour with him ; for Portargis's good-nature and tender heart, now having an unobstructed field to move in, and not counterbalanced by any preparation of mind, acted like the guns rolling all to one side of a ship, and bore him down : he could not stand the appeal to his feelings ; and perhaps, at the moment, would have renounced half his follies, to have saved his father.

She met him, one day, when the earl was thought in the most imminent danger, coming out of his chamber and hardly able to support himself : she followed him into the drawing-room ; and there he laid his head on a table and wept like a child. She had more firmness, but not enough to endure this trial : she tried to soothe him, and to reconcile him to that which appeared the will of Providence. When he could speak, he broke out into the most violent accusations of himself, for want of affection to so good a father, still mingling with them, reproaches on his mother, for having contributed to his father's uneasinesses and his

his own errors ; and repeating to Gertrude, ‘ O ! you cannot think how good he has been ; you can have no idea of his kindness ! ’—He burst out in a mixt tumult of joy and grief, with scarcely breath to utter six words together, into something like a recital of his father’s expressions in favor of that attachment, or rather habitude of love, which if it was not born with him, was nearly as old as himself.

Gertrude was dumb: she could not be surprised, but she was overwhelmed ; and she heard not his convulsive intreaties, that she would, as she now safely might, ratify his father’s permission. ‘ Give me a little time,’ she at last replied,—‘ do not suppose me unkind or ungrateful, but I am bewildered ; and I do not know what I ought to do.’—Portargis was beginning to reproach her, when they were both called to the earl’s bed-side, where the countess had just paid her daily visit : he addressed the young people with the most pathetic tenderness, recommending their union, as soon as they should be of age, and shewed how prudent, how disinterested, nay, how wise we can be, when this world is compelled to quit its hold on us. He exerted himself to make his son sensible of the merit of her whom he seemed to bequeath to him ; and using expressions which raised her almost to a level with the family into which he, in the handsomest terms, invited her, he concluded with saying, ‘ You will find my affairs in exact order—thanks to good Sydenham ; and you will come into possession of an abundant income,
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and an improving estate ; but I leave you nothing as valuable as this girl. Be civil to your mother, and tell her you had my dying injunction to marry Miss Aubrey.'

'You are too indulgent, my lord,' said Gertrude: 'I have little to say on the subject.—I ought perhaps to have not a word to say, but that which my gratitude would dictate ; but I have seen that splendor is no substitute for comfort ; and perhaps I am made too cautious. I love Lord Portargis as my brother ; and I shall be happy to devote my life to his happiness, if I am sure that in doing it, I do not sacrifice my own without securing his. We must be miserable together if he is not very steady : he knows me perfectly : he can judge how he can endure me as a wife : he must recollect what I am, and who I am. It is at his own peril he takes me : he is, at this moment, free from all engagement, and surely he had better remain so.'—'Not for the world,' he replied: 'give me your consent, Gatty, and rely on my honor when I assure you, that nothing shall be wanting to making you happy. Consider I have always been trying to please you, and to gain your good opinion ; and therefore it will be no new task : if you will not promise yourself to me, I shall then indeed give up, and care not what becomes of me.'

'So many are the instances,' said Lord Luxmore, exerting himself to speak, 'of young men made dissipated by the disappointment of a fair attachment, that I should be sorry to see my son
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in this situation. I shall not be here to guard him; therefore, Gatty, for *my* comfort, for the ease of my last moments, if you have no great reluctance, engage yourself.—Come to me, my children, and let me join your hands.’

The viscount led up the trembling Gertrude, and the earl, with all the little energy left him, gave them his blessing.—It seemed his last exertion: he reiterated the blessing, and then recollecting himself, said in a low voice to Portargis, ‘ Say nothing to your mother: she will only torment her:—send Gatty back with Sydenham, if he comes. I must now think of myself.’

Events came too fast for even the sober-minded Gertrude to sustain their rapidity: she was obliged to suffer her tears to flow at their pleasure, and to beg a few minutes’ quiet solitude: she then returned to Lord Luxmore’s bed-side, where, excluding even the viscount, she passed the remainder of that day, as she had done the two preceding, in anxious expectation of Mr. Sydenham; and when night came, in the more painful expectation of the change which superstition, rather than experience, made the nurses assure her would take place at midnight. Lady Luxmore had a new friend in a next-door neighbor. Mr. Reynardson was in the house, and Lady Elma had great consolation in her power, for those at all inclined to listen to it, as she argued eloquently against the unreasonableness of sorrow where it could be of no avail.

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Lord Luxmore, however, remained three days longer in this state, and without growing perceptibly worse: he smiled complacently when he saw his son with Gertrude; and the little he could say, shewed a mind fitly preparing to leave to others what had been the vain pursuit of his best years: accident accounted for Mr. Sydenham's silence, by informing the family of his absence from home, and the uncertainty of his stay in any one place.

The earl remained satisfied with Gertrude's reading to him; and at intervals he seemed disposed to converse seriously. The Scriptures were not now as new to him as in his former illness; and it was great comfort to him, that, without the formality of even fetching a book, Gertrude's mind and memory could minister to his necessities.

CHAPTER LXI.

A steady mind. Its contrast. A happy recovery. A secret half disclosed. Abelard. The young housekeeper. A jilt. Submission to reproof. A bold enterprise. Sympathetic feeling. Importance of being able to amuse in sickness. Portraits.

IT was neither hope with its elations, nor fear with its depressions, that could make Gertrude swerve from her plain duty: her sense of right and wrong was not *founded* on her feelings, but *animated* by them: when informed that she was to be Countess of Luxmore, she was still Gertrude Aubrey; and had her scarcely-credible prospect been removed, even by the caprice of him who had sanctioned it, the change would not have relaxed the smallest part of her assiduities.

Lord Portargis was not quite so steady: he could now support the prospect of his father's death with more composure, though he felt affectionately towards him: he availed himself of every moment when he could seize on Gertrude, to beg her not to defer their marriage longer than was necessary; he talked of a private wedding which would save appearances; and his mind was fermenting with its own fullness. To have patience, was the only acquiescence he would not promise; and his caution proved his knowledge of himself,

himself, and did credit to his honesty, if not to his magnanimity.

But the earl recovered.—A short but sharp fit of the gout—the first he had had, and which he bore with patience and gratitude, removed his danger; and, in a few days after his physicians had consigned him to the care of those who take, frankly and fairly, for their motto, ‘*Mors mihi luctum*,’ he was on crutches and in the drawing-room.

A fine September day received him to his unexpected state of convalescence; and when Gertrude had dispatched the countess for her airing, seen the earl seated comfortably and free from pain, opposite the exhilarating prospect, and Lady Elma, who had called in to make her friendly enquiries, was diffusing around her the sunshine of benevolent feelings, she was, perhaps, not only happier than ever in her life, but happier than is the common lot of this world. If she had any pride, the proof she had received of the attachment of the family, might now soothe it: if she had any vanity, her importance with them might inflate it; but she had as little of either quality as most girls; and the quantity she brought into the world with her, had been very much extracted from her composition, by that most powerful air-pump, adversity, which ejects from the mind all the *gas* that comes under the denomination of nonsense.

In the present instance, she, without her own consciousness was acted on by Mr. Sterling’s frequent precepts, ‘Give to every part of your mind its proper province: keep things and ideas se-

separate : do not let your imagination interfere with realities, or bring to the test of reality, that which is addressed to the imagination. Do not convert the Scriptures into allegories, or exact of a poem that it should contain facts ; and when you look on human life, take care the picture is not falsified by reflected lights.'—In considering, therefore, on her bed, or in her chamber, thê great, the flattering, the gaudy prospect before her, she endeavored to see it as it would *be* to her, and not as it might *appear* to her fancy. The elevation it promised, made her not giddy, but cautious ; and she felt it some abatement of her confidence that she must set out in life, with one as ignorant of it as she was, and still more exposed to its temptations.

But we must be ingenuous ; and though we claim great approbation of Gertrude's equanimity, though we portray it as the natural consequence of a mind thus disciplined, and we exhort all young women to keep that command over themselves, even in trying circumstances, which proves them the disciples of Him who came to teach us forbearance ; yet, as we would not deter from honest endeavors by setting the standard of right too high, we will confess that Gertrude had an assisting feeling in her bosom when she was thus moderate : and not only in the present instance had this feeling aided her : she had experienced its influence when she suffered herself to be interested in Mr. Carr's application to Lady Luxmore, and still more when that application failed ; and had she been a party to the subsequent attempt of Dr. Mirabel,

rabel, it would equally have promoted his interest, and have made her satisfied in the repulse: it was a strange feeling that could, at one time, make her permit a request and acquiesce in its refusal, and render her at another, to all appearance, anxious for her fate, and negligent of it; but such a feeling existed; and having been thus candid, we must not at present go farther in explaining, than to say, that no one of the three who had offered themselves, was the man with whom she would have wished to pass her life. The controlling power of her principles was most to be recognised in the secret of her heart: she dared not give form and substance to her wish;—she prayed not to be led into temptation: she would have married Harry Carr cheerfully, because she could esteem him, she liked him, and she could have done her duty:—she would have suffered herself to have been given passively to Dr. Mirabel, because she would have feared to refuse what might assist in detaching an idea that had got hold on her mind. Not to be grateful in the present instance, would have been, to her apprehension, a rejection of the hand of the Almighty; and had any evil befallen the viscount, in consequence of her rejection, she would, though free from superstition, have blamed any obstinacy on her part:—beside, she loved Portargis.

She was now dismissed from her close attendance, and resumed her usual habits of industry. The viscount with more delight, but with perhaps somewhat less of method, returned to his office of classic tutor, and fancied himself the Abelard of

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The drama ; but he could not prevail on his pupil to think herself at all honored by the parallel with Heloisa. Mr. Sterling had too frequently wished every young woman, in danger of the tyranny of passion, to read the genuine correspondence of these lovers, to admit of her being ignorant of the degradation to which the female victim had subjected herself ; and she was perfectly convinced by it, that when two Cupids are harnessed together, and the more powerful needs the whipcord, it is time for the other to slip out of the collar. ‘ Who,’ Mr. Sterling would say, ‘ can expect honor, constancy, fidelity, from passion and selfishness?’ As Abelard is portrayed to us by the most authentic documents, he is the coarse voluptuary ; and however Helois might have been deceived in him at first, she ought to have been disgusted with his brutality. It is impossible to read her requests to see him, to hear from him, and to gain his attention and advice, in matters where she needed them, and to know the manner in which they were answered, without thinking him a brutish, obdurate wretch. You see in his mind and feelings not the smallest trace of cultivation ; he might have been of any country and at any age of that country, where society was in its rudest state ; and I can picture this theologian and this tremendous disputant, this accomplished scholar, this luminary of the world, as a Dutch boor sitting wrapt in a dirty blanket, and smoaking his pipe, while a wife might chop wood for him, and his children might be learning that vice of nature, depredation. If the
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man had been a consistent character, he would have had my respect; but when he chose to play the Damon, and to set up for a pretty fellow amongst the women, which certainly was the ambition to which his love of polemics succeeded, he ought to have affected to carry a heart in his bosom.'

Almost insensibly, and certainly without any effort on her part, Gertrude had become, in great measure, emancipated from her subjection to Lady Luxmore. The establishment at Brighton was such as befitted the rank of the family; and the expence was liberally defrayed by the earl, who, to relieve the countess from cares which did not tend to her peace, had requested Gertrude to superintend it. It was a novel duty to her; but it required, she soon found, only the exertion of a little attention and common sense; and, under the guidance of her wish to do right, she acquitted herself so much to the earl's approbation, that her province was every day enlarged, and she found herself responsible for the whole conduct of the family-detail. By an even-handed justice, by quiet steadiness, and by a successful endeavor to know what was fit, she escaped error, and had the satisfaction of pleasing those for whom she took pains, and those whom she was to employ in the same endeavor. She had only to endure a few side-speeches or taunting witticisms from the countess; and as she never replied to them farther than by an offer to quit her responsibility, the conversation could not last long.

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It was not in Lord Luxmore's nature to give pain willingly, or to cause needless trouble. He, therefore, on the first day after the crisis of his disorder, made Gertrude write a few lines to Mr. Sydenham, at the hazard of their not reaching him, but with the intention of sparing him an unnecessary journey; and scarcely was this duty of friendship and politeness performed, when Mr. Sydenham's absence from home, for which the family had supposed nothing but an ordinary cause, was accounted for, by an article in the newspapers, announcing the marriage of Sir Veni Vidi Vici of Sham park, Nottinghamshire, which the compositor had, by some strange blunder, made Nottinghamshire, with Miss Brett, so described as to leave no doubt of her being Mr. Sydenham's niece.

The paragraph first caught the countess's eye; and she read it with an expression that, if the subject would have borne it, might have been construed into triumph; but how could it concern her?—and, above all, how could it please her?—Writers have endeavored to define and analyse the pseudo-pleasure we feel in the calamity of another. O! let it not be reasoned on; let it be proscribed even in the mention; but, if it does, if it must exist, it is to be accounted for on the disgraceful corruption of our nature,—as a sin against the laws of the religion we profess, against man, against God,—as fitted only to savage nature,—as ‘not to be named amongst Christians.’

The earl and Gertrude, who alone were present with the countess at the moment, stared at each other.

other. ‘This must be wrong,’ said his lordship; ‘this can never be with the concurrence of my good friend: this must be some quarrel, some jealousy, some pique, or some jilting trick: and I fear the girl must be ruined; for she is of age, and her large property has, I dare say, allured Sir Veni.’ ‘Do you know him?’ said the countess.

‘O! yes; he’s a fine dashing soldier-like fellow, with not too much principle, but a great deal of good humor: he has not, I suppose, by this time, a sixpence of his own; for he has been making ducks and drakes of his money, ever since I knew him; and I fancy his family-mansion is mortgaged up to the chimnies. It must be a bad business—I must write myself to Sydenham.’

‘Ah! replied her ladyship, ‘she is not the first fool that has thrown herself away; and she won’t be the last.’

The earl had prudence enough to hold his tongue.—Gertrude heard not what was said.

‘If I had been of her council,’ continued the countess, ‘I could have told her what it is to throw one’s self away.’

His lordship’s prudence tottered. Still Gertrude heard not; till setting down his coffee-cup, he replied—‘Unhandsome, Lady Luxmore: I beg nothing more may be said on that subject. If this man behaves no worse than I have done, she will have little cause to complain. I have not wasted your property:—I have not disgraced you: I would have done better, if you would have done your part; but if we come to personal reflections,
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which I detest, perhaps I may have as much to say as you. I *insist* on your silence. I *advise* it as your friend. I beg your pardon; but you force me to be rude.'

Lady Luxmore, for the first time, perhaps, in her conjugal life, obeyed when she might have resisted, and was silent with the power of speaking. Was it that his lordship was right?—Was it that his lordship was firm? Or was there something, in his unaverted eye, that subdued her?

Perhaps this transient *démêlé* might have disturbed Gertrude, and have given her some weak apprehensions for the continuance of her present peace and comforts; but the cause that had given occasion to it, was so infinitely superior in importance to the effect produced, that she heard the dialogue without feeling it. Though not inclined to be the world's dupe, she had not learnt suspicion: she knew that its society was composed of more than one sort of persons, and she could not be ignorant that characters shaded into each other, till it was difficult to discriminate between their component colors; but that the very good, the highly commended, the esteemed, the beloved, the examples of life and manners, should, in an instant, as it were, fall 'from the bright meridian where' they 'stood,' into the abyss of folly and inconsistency, and become, instead of the pride, the pleasure, the boast of a family, its shame and its torment, she, who had known the restraint of the curb before she had felt the stimulus of the spur, could not understand. She knew not what it is to
act

act not on principle : she knew not the lordly character of the will : she knew not that years of the best teaching, and every assurance of success, are daily reduced to nothing, literally in the twinkling of an eye, by the electric spark of wayward passion. Could she have reasoned on the subject, she would have seen the good sense of the heathen mythologists, in making a paramount deity of Cupid : there was no other way, in their system, of keeping one half of the world within the description of rational beings. Let us not be told that we can make no allowances, that we know not the human heart, and are 'foe to love : ' we would make every allowance for every thing honest ; we know the human heart ; and we pity it when there is the smallest claim to pity ; and to love, as the sunshine of young existence, as possessing, beyond any other passion, the power of creating virtue and rewarding it with happiness, we are sworn friends ; but a jilt is a jilt, and a jilt is a person entitled to no credit ; therefore Gertrude could not admit the idea that Miss Brett's conduct could come under this description.

But the return to Lord Luxmore's last letter was a bar to her acquittal ; for though it detailed circumstances with forbearance, the truth could not be told, without a sad impeachment of Miss Brett's moral integrity. She certainly had led the way in Basil Sydenham's attachment to her ; but that attachment, his general respect for women, his feeling for the necessary shackles of their sex, his esteem for his cousin, the love consequent on relation

tion and early habit, her own personal and acquired recommendations, and, perhaps as strong an incentive as any, her preference of him, had made deep and serious impression, and not to be destroyed but by unworthiness; and even then not immediately. It requires some time to persuade a generous nature that the mind which has seemed congenial, has no sentiment in common; it requires some rhetoric to persuade a *gentleman*, that a woman well born, endowed, and educated, can be guilty of vulgar baseness; and it requires resolution to get rid of that habit of thinking which makes domestic union its farthest horizon, and which addresses itself, in detail and circumstance, to an hour which is to give new cares, new solitudes, and new pleasures.

The communications of Mr. Sydenham's letter were, that he was disappointed, and his sister broken-hearted. Basil fortunately was still detained abroad. Sir Veni, having been unsuccessful at play, had retreated to the house of a friend, to whose daughters Miss Brett was, at the time, making a visit. Hearing from his host, that she was a young woman with a large fortune at her own disposal, and not at all checked by the warning that she was engaged, he betted his last five guineas with a young man in the house, that he would win this betrothed lady: the father very honorably apprised her of the wager, and almost advised her returning home; but she laughed at the supposed danger; and more could not have been said without offending her. Nothing was perceived

perceived by the family: she quitted them in a fortnight to return home: her own carriage and servants were to convey her: the distance was not twenty miles; but her next letter was dated from a hotel in London, and subscribed by the name that proclaimed her mad folly. From thence, she betook herself, with the object of her new passion, to Holyrood-house, and again addressed her mother, with assurances of her perfect happiness: 'her hitherto delicate health' it was probable, would obtain vigor in a northern climate: Sir Veni was a most affectionate husband, and was determined to grow prudent: she had, to be sure, done a very foolish thing; but it convinced her that what she had before felt and fancied love, was not that genuine passion, as she must confess she had never loved any thing in this world as she did Sir Veni, from the first hour of conversing with him:—he had great resources in himself, and joined her in every thing respectful and affectionate: he would send Mr. Sydenham some moot game, and she hoped her dear mother and good uncle would see it was the best plan to take no notice of what could not now be helped. She did not doubt poor dear Basil would soon reconcile himself, and see it was all for the best: she had not had a letter from him for so long, that indeed she must say, this was in a great degree the cause of the rash step she had taken. It was, at all events, her determination that, on her part, there should be no breach between her and her relations.' The lady was not treated unfairly in this detail of her proceedings and sentiments; for

for Mr. Sydenham had inclosed her letter : it proved her a dishonorable bankrupt in common faith, and as such she was now despised by the head of her family.

Gertrude was released, in mind as well as in person, when she could quit the room after hearing this narrative : she had only half an hour to spare, but this was all bestowed on the event, and its probable consequences :—never had she felt as she did now. She saw, in idea, Mrs. Brett bowed to the earth in sorrow and in shame, not daring to look at her brother, recollecting his active exertions for her Mary's happiness, and repenting every step she had taken :—she doubted whether Mr. Sydenham and his sister could remain together ; and then this good man, this excellent father, kind brother, and invaluable friend !—to see him making up his manly mind to the voluntary exile of his only son, perhaps approving and encouraging that which he knew must break a father's heart, in the words, ' Stay thou, and let me die : ' O ! it was grievous !—and that Basil Sydenham should be treated so !—The clock struck, and she set out for Lady Elma's.

The suspension of intercourse which Lord Luxmore's illness had occasioned to Lady Elma and Gertrude, made them meet with increased pleasure. Mr. Reynardson had been, for a few days, absent, and returning just at this time, was of use in assisting to amuse the earl and engage Lord Portargis, on whom it now required the utmost con-

strait to keep secret his situation with regard to Gertrude, who, why she could scarcely tell, dreaded beyond all reason, its publication. His money was laid out in presents for her, which made her anxious rather than happy, since a discovery of them would have, at least for a time, have subjected her to very unpleasant suspicions; and without being unkind, it was very difficult to prevent his being seen constantly with her. At length, like persons who could not depend on their own prudence, they laid down rules, and times, and seasons for meeting, and for being separate; but this caution made little more difference in the affair than convincing them still more of their difficulty.

If Lady Elma had any suspicions on the subject, she was too well bred to hint them, after she had learned from Gertrude the jeopardy in which they might place her; but, as if she studied the comfort of her young friend, she drew her more than ever from her home, and by introducing to the countess a set of acquaintance calculated to employ and gratify her, and by expressing her wish to relieve her from a sameness of society, she rendered her thankful for a plan that left her, more than ever, at liberty to detail, without fear of contradiction or observation, the miseries she had to endure from a negligent husband, an unaffectionate son, and a learned Miss, who thought herself wiser than any body, 'because she understood grammar.'

To amuse Lord Luxmore under his remaining weakness,

weakness and the fluctuation of animal spirits, consequent on a reduced frame, was much of the employment of Gertrude's hours, and for which she could forego any thing. It is one of the pleasantest charities of life ; and it is very much to be wished that, in the pursuit of accomplishments, those were reckoned particularly worthy of attainment, which contribute to the comfort and recovery of our friends, when in that state of health, between sick and well, which is, perhaps, more trying to the spirits and temper than positive disease. We cannot be supposed to recommend educating young persons as slaves to the caprice and fastidiousness of those who fight all around them under the false colors of imaginary evil ; but we certainly do conceive that the judgment, the good-sense, and the activity of the sound, can do much to the benefit of the *half-sick*, and that the want of powers of this description, has been sometimes felt, and resentment shewn in hastiness towards those whose intentions were deserving of acquittal.

And even in the happier intercourse of society, to amuse is of inestimable value ; and not to be able to do it has not unfrequently laid the foundation of apathy which has ended in unkindness, and estrangement. When our vigorous-minded friend William, married the object of his early and tender affection, it was matter of hope and anxiety to all their relatives, that they, who were so well fitted to discharge the duties of parents, might have a numerous progeny ; but a few years reconciled every one to their childless prospects ; and it was soon
perceived

perceived, that, should Providence withhold this blessing, the incompleteness of their happiness would scarcely be felt; for Susan united in her loveliness all the charm of all ages; and while she rendered to William the services of an informed companion and a sensible friend, she reserved, for the hour when his stretch of thought relaxed, and great concerns remitted their pressure, a sportive-ness, an adaptability, a novelty of powers, and variety of ideas, that left nothing to be sought.

If we would see the contrast, let us look at Walter and his Lucy. He, at thirty, married an amiable creature, of twenty-three: Nothing could be objected to the match: he had wealth, she had pedigree; and their tempers good, and their sentiments correct, they laid claim to a large share of human happiness. Equally disliking London, except as an occasional resort, they settled themselves on his noble estate, in a mansion and situation that realised every wish; and while occupied with visitors and friends, all went well; but the first time Walter had occasion to say, ‘My dearest Lucy, what can you do to amuse me?—he felt that he needed something beyond innocence and prettiness, to enliven a deep snow, and remove an indolent nervous head-ache: music he liked very well, when in a state to hear it: her attempts at copying prints into drawings he approved, when he could correct her outline: her nice needle-work he admired, when the motion of her hand did not annoy him; and he would have listened to her reading to him with pleasure, could he have substituted

a natural tone for the high pitch, and avoided keynote of her place of education ; but when these powers were useless, what could pretty Lucy do ? Conversation she had none : her curiosity had never been roused ; and what ‘ became a young woman ’ was the boundary of her enquiry : the care of her person, occupied stated periods of the morning ; and Walter looked forward on certain days in the week, to the prospect of a longer solitude than usual : repaid, indeed, by the improved and glowing brightness of her complexion, and her hair. In their evenings, he proposed chess or backgammon : ‘ she, happy to oblige, would play willingly, if he would have the patience to teach her.’ Of cards she had more knowledge ; but her games were those of the merry circle : ‘ she would learn cribbage, or picquet with pleasure ; but she could not say she *liked* games for two : she wished she could amuse him, but she knew she was a very dull companion.’

It was not in Walter’s nature to be severe ; and the inconvenience appeared temporary, till wearied with the hebdomadal welcome and farewell of a situation five and twenty miles from town, he began to wish himself less dependent on society ; and relaxed in his invitations. The experiment of three years, excluded hope, and confirmed his forebodings ; and the remedy nearest at hand, a long residence in London, and excursions to places of multitude, was seized on. Still there were times, and times in every day, when, as a domestic man, he felt his
haunting

haunting vacuum. Lucy made no interests, no improvements: to keep up what she had learnt, was her aim; and she was diligent by measure: she played the same lessons of uninteresting execution: she copied drawings of the same class: she read and extracted; and when the extract was neatly written into her Morocco volume, her conscience and her memory felt equally relieved.

A temporary variety offered itself in a visit from a female cousin of Lucy's, a native of Ireland, who united to the advantages peculiar to that country, the softened interests of an education in the south of France. Walter was in ill health and low spirits when she arrived: she roused him, and his maladies of mind and body fled. Without much personal attraction, she charmed him: she professed nothing: she could do any thing. When Lucy had risen from her instrument, after a long cramp sonata, Rose would sit down negligently, and in gloves and unsuspended chat, play a soft melody; she would command silence, and sing, till her her southern feelings bade her break off.—When Lucy requested to be saved the trouble of informing herself of the state of public affairs,' Rose could discuss the fate of empires, and predict the views of tyranny. While Lucy was elaborately 'finishing a distance,' on which she had spent two months, Rose would sketch her figure, and give it, where alone it could possess it, animation and a character. When Lucy was trying to comprehend

the interest of chess, Rose gave her queen, and was victor; and when Lucy was bestowing all her taste and thought on a dress for a ball, Rose eclipsed by privation and simplicity. Rose used no artifice; she must have been artful to be other than she was. Lucy was too just to be jealous; but her happiness was gone; and Rose, in the alternative of impeaching her high honor, or withdrawing her powers of usefulness, could not hesitate. She sought again her friends in Languedoc, leaving for her cousin an affectionate letter, exhorting her to activity of mind: the advice came when habits were fixed: Lucy could not comprehend that her husband could disapprove her, for continuing to be that which had attracted his love. Perseverance in right, she understood to mean an unvaried state of things; on which principle a beautiful infant should never grow to the age of manhood, and the dials should shew the hour once in twelve. Obstinacy was the result of her reasoning; and she saw her husband change his character, and become gravely dissipated, in the comforting consciousness *that he had always found her the woman he married.*

Lady Elma was of great use in Gertrude's plan, as she assisted in passing many evenings with the earl, and in this time, Gertrude, by steady observation, enabled herself to repeat what she had seen. She made it a duty to get a knowledge of all the amusing games that Lady Elma played to
such

such perfection as gave them an interest beyond their own; she procured every thing in her reach that was admirable, curious, or diverting, and was encouraged by seeing that his recovery seemed to give him that perennial well of tranquil joy, a thankful heart.

CHAPTER LXII.

Prudent restraint. Advantageous influence. New introductions. Untimely repentance. Contradictory reports. Deep thought. The chaperon a woman of address. Memoirs. A tabby.

TO save that most valuable and now abridged possession, time; to avoid observation, and, if possible, to starve down the countess's still-existing disposition to take in an ill sense all she said or did, Gertrude, whose acquaintance, of necessity, must increase with that of Lady Luxmore, still declined all personal intimacies and all invitations to public or private amusements; and in this prudence, Lady Luxmore kindly encouraged her, by adding, whenever she heard her excuse herself, her opinion that it would be very improper for a young person in 'her situation of life,' to be seen 'gadding about' in company; beside 'Miss Aubrey had no fortune of her own, and all her expences came out of *her* purse;' therefore 'it would be very wrong for *her* to think of expensive plans:' she must be sensible of 'the charge she was already to her;' and 'certainly there was no occasion to make it more.' All this Gertrude heard, and felt to her fingers' ends; but a hearty cry, which she could generally enjoy undisturbed in her own chamber, unless one of the maid-

maid-servants came, with her execrations and commiserations, always settled the matter.

She soon perceived that a place such as Brighton, even seeing it only as she saw it, must present an epitome of the world worth her observation ; and under the guidance of Lady Elma, she would, even restricted as she was, have seen it to great advantage, had not the '*pour se faire aimable*' thrown a mist over the objects she wished to understand.

It is perverse to complain of the effect of agreeable qualities ; but certainly Lady Elma's had that of giving so pleasant a hue to most minds, that what they were in themselves, it required more sagacity than a novice could possess, to discover, and mis-led as completely as the principle, to make Monsieur feel happy, mis-leads a traveller in France, when assured that six leagues are three.

Gertrude would not, perhaps, have suspected this, had she not been led to infer it from what she observed in the countess, who, in the society of Lady Elma, appeared a creature to be moulded and fashioned at the pleasure of any one who would take the trouble ; for having, in process of days, learnt some of the little arts of popularity, or at least, veiling her temper, so of that those who could flatter her, might approach her without pricking their fingers, she had procured, not only sympathy for herself, but some very valuable assistance, in form of good advice, which those who listened to her, thought proper to bestow on Miss Aubrey.

When

When Lady Elma was in danger of being pestered with persons who would have proved hindrances to that independence she affected, she amused herself, and got rid of them, by turning them over to Lady Luxmore, to whom, as they were, in general, persons, if not of birth or wealth, of high connections, they were always acceptable; and in some of these instances, Gertrude saw more of the truth, than she could otherwise have got at: she took all these circumstances still as lessons; and who can say they did not assist in forming her character, and giving her that power of acting for herself, which must otherwise have been inspiration if she had ever attained it?

On the Steyne one day with Lady Elma, two ladies, one rather advanced in years, came up to them; and in terms of the greatest fondness the elder exprest her delight. ‘My dearest Lady Elma! how overjoyed I am to meet your la’ship! how long has Brighton been blest with you? whereabouts are you? what stay do you make? I am so vastly glad to see you! Give me leave to introduce my friend, Miss Strangeways to you. Miss Strangeways came forward, in a style that shewed her acquainted with the manners of ‘the upper world;’ and mutual introductions having passed, Gertrude found that the old lady was Mrs. Mammon, and that she was newly arrived from Bognor. ‘Do you, my dear, take that young lady’s arm,’ said Mrs. Mammon to Miss Strangeways; ‘and let me have a little *cause* with Lady Elma. I am so happy to meet her!’

Miss Strangeways *appeared* about the age of Gertrude: she was little in her person, and fashionable in her dress and deportment. A pair of fine dark eyes were set off by *rouge*; and a face, of no regular beauty, was improved into prettiness by vivacity and intelligence; her ease and good humor soon made Gertrude forget that they had never met before; and Lord Portargis joining the party, Lady Elma arranged with him that introduction to his mother, which Gertrude knew well to be a symptom that she wished to be, in some measure, rid of her newly-arrived friend and her appendage.

An acquaintance soon commenced. Mrs. Mammon was just the fit person to contribute to Lady Luxmore's pleasures; and between them there was a 'quid pro quo,' that promised a friendship, as lasting as their stay at Brighton. Mrs. Mammon was connected not only in the world of rank, but that of power; and having seen the greater part of what is to be seen in Europe, and knowing how to make the most of her advantages, she was a companion of no common recommendations: it was impossible not to be pleased with her, as impossible as that she should not be pleased with the opportunity of domesticating herself with persons who lived in 'a good style,' and had a vacant place in their carriage. O! what is it that some females will not do for a ride?

Though this sudden intimacy proved occasionally a little loss of time to Gertrude, who was forced to leave her sitting-room when Mrs. Mammon called, and to entertain Miss Strangeways, or,
if

If Lady Luxmore was well enough to walk, to accompany them, that Miss Strangeways might neither interrupt the dear friends nor 'feel forlorn,' yet she was inclined to be pleased with this new source of amusement to Lord Luxmore, who not having regained his strength, was still very much restricted in his circuit of pleasure, and whose spirits did not recover with his health.

It was, indeed, with sincere concern that Gertrude observed a sad alteration in his cheerfulness: he was far from what he had been before his last attack: he looked well, and was rallied by his acquaintance for being hypish and idle, and as if disposed to give way to melancholy; but Gertrude knew him well enough to be assured there must be cause for the change: she hoped, at first, that it was only the seriousness of a mind sensible of a narrow escape: she put in his way whatever could divert him, and tried to cheer without disturbing his spirits: she would have sacrificed her pursuits and Lady Elma, to the satisfaction of contributing to his comfort; but her offers were coldly declined, and sometimes pettishly rejected; and she retired in tears, to ask herself how she had offended. 'Go, go,' he would say, 'leave me; seek your own happiness. I would not for the world disturb it: leave me to myself. I am fit company for no one else—only keep Lady Luxmore away.'

The company of his son, who was very laudably attentive, was as little soothing to him. Sometimes he would talk of going abroad again; and sometimes he would give a spur to those arrangements,

ments for his son, which Lord Portargis did not now hasten, preparatory to his joining the ‘well-dressed’ dragoons, into whose number he was to be admitted: in company, he seemed for a while to forget his dejection; and as no persons had such power to rouse him, as Lady Elma, Mrs. Mammon, and Mr. Reynardson, common kindness drew them much to the house.

Two of this trio were always acceptable to Gertrude; and she might, perhaps, equally with the rest of the family, have enjoyed Mrs. Mammon’s lively descriptions of foreign countries and manners, if the good lady’s inevitable inquisitiveness had not sometimes annoyed her. To such questions as ‘Pray, my dear Miss Aubrey, how old are you?’ ‘Pray, my good young friend, let me ask you, what was your mother’s name?’ she could answer without reserve, and feeling only the rough privilege assumed by a superior station; but there were prying and oblique insinuations, with a note of interrogation at the end of them; there were supposes, with ‘they say,’ and ‘I hear,’ and ‘perhaps,’ that distressed her excessively; and she was, on such occasions, obliged to redouble her intreaties to Portargis, that he would not, by any indiscretion, render her the gaze of curiosity, or the victim of his mother’s resentment. ‘All you can do for me,’ said she, ‘all that your father could do or say, would not prevent her turning me out of the house; and whither could I go, without leaving it in her power to accuse me of the basest conduct?

Let

Let us wait till we get away from this gossiping place, and then we can act at liberty.'

At first, the viscount braved all these dangers, and even would have courted them, in hopes that Gertrude might be placed at Luxmore, but it was easy to convince him of the many objections to so violent a convulsion; and by degrees he acquiesced in her wishes, without repugnance. He thought not so seriously of his father's state of low spirits as she did. That shrewdness which sometimes results from good sense, but is often found without it, taught him to think it the effect of his precluded hope with regard to Gertrude; but as she never had admitted the previous idea, she could not listen to that following from it.

Portargis was however right. Lord Luxmore felt that, like a man expecting sentence of death, he had made over his possessions to one from whom he could no more expect than ask their restitution. He had nothing to alledge against any body: no unfair means, whatever, had been used to gain his approbation: what he had done and ratified, was only the fruit of a conscientious solicitude to fulfil the duty of a father, by considering how he might best secure a son, so exposed as the viscount must be, from the Scylla and Charybdis of vice and folly; and had Lord Luxmore been a little farther advanced in good habits of thinking, he might have felt the invaluable remuneration of an approving conscience; but there is a neutral ground between folly and wisdom that is comfortless, unless the traveller can look forward with confidence; and

and wanting this, he was sensible that 'vows made in pain' it is very difficult to keep. Let it, however, be remembered, that though even our wishes ought to be strictly guarded, there is respect due to him who will suffer in secret, rather than give his wish 'a local habitation and a name;' and to this respect Lord Luxmore had a fair claim: no intention of rescinding his consent, no paltry subterfuge found its way into his ruminations; he thought only of withdrawing himself from the hourly mortification, and wished simply that he had not been so precipitate. Often was he inclined to avow to Gertrude the weakness under which he was sinking; but unable to maintain his own esteem, he could not hope her's would stand the test of such a communication. His medical attendants could discover nothing but a low lurking fever, which came and went irregularly, and which, as it was not to be detected when he was amused, was hardly acknowledged to exist.

Mrs. Mammon being of that description of persons, who, having lived to walk, must walk to live, wished much to persuade every one, as idle as herself; that walking was the grand elixir of human life; and could the earl have made the attempt, she would have led him out to experimentize. But obliged to postpone the discipline she promised him, she took out, by turns, all the rest of her pedestrian acquaintance, and amongst them, of course, the countess, who, now convinced that she had two feet, and that *sauf son honneur* she might use them at Brighton, got occasionally to some distance from the

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the Marine Parade, in return for Mrs. Mammon's company in her airings. Mrs. Mammon was fashionably select in her associations; and even Mr. Reynardson was indebted to his being the natural son of 'a man of rank' for the honor of her notice. An old gentleman had offered her his services, but he was a plebeian, and she could not, either by reflection or refraction, catch from him a ray of what she sought. That he was good, that he was wise, that he was independent, that avarice could not tempt his integrity, or ambition corrupt his loyalty, that he loved his country too well to live upon its vitals, or to repine at its demands, that he passed each day as he might safely pass the next, and was established in habits of virtue, which every day improved, were recommendations no way addressed to the acceptance of Mrs. Mammon: his coat was unfashionable in color and in make, his stockings were worsted, and his whole dress peculiar, because it had stood still in its form. She complimented him with her pity 'for the sake of his connections,' that he was not in parliament; and she laughed as heartily as *etiquette* permitted, when he said *the expence* would have deterred him from seeking the elevation. Mrs. Mammon was not incautious in her acquaintance.

Lady Luxmore's *protégée* ought, on the same principle, if nonsense can ever be consistent, to have been left at home; but she, as has been said, was very convenient to take off Miss Strangeways; and here commenced her knowledge of that petty trumpery world of cunning and prejudice, and all
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the littlenesses of the mind, that form the very atmosphere of the selfish.

An appointment had been made by this *partie quarrée* for one of those *delightful* walks of which they had, in a fine autumn, begun to taste the charms, when, on meeting for the purpose, Gertrude perceived Miss Strangeways not in her usual spirits. Tears appeared still in her eyes, and her muscles seemed not to have recovered from the form into which grief or vexation had thrown them; —but Gertrude could not ask a question; she could only, and this almost involuntarily and unconsciously, put out a little more tenderness of manner.

This seemed to operate as an encouragement to frankness on the part of Miss Strangeways; and having found it difficult to reply, even to common questions or remarks, without betraying the excess of irritation under which her spirits labored, she said, when at safe distance from the pair of friends before them, ‘ I beg your pardon for my ill-behavior; I am ashamed of it; but Mrs. Maminon has it all to answer for. You have no idea of what I have to endure with her. I cannot expect you to believe me; for, I dare say, you are, as every body must be who knows her slightly, charmed with her; and there cannot be, I am sensible, a more agreeable woman; but to know her *really*, you should see her at home. There is no one here to whom I can look for any comfort, but you Miss Aubrey; and if you will let me speak freely to you, it will do me good: for Lady Elma and
Mr.

Mr. Reynardson, and every body who has the happiness of knowing you, gives you such a character, that I am sure I am safe in speaking to you, and shall be the better for your advice. You know I came from Bognor with Mrs. Mammon. We had met last year at Clifton, when my father and mother were with me, and she seemed to like us so very much; that we called on her in town; and when she had settled her Bognor-plan, she beset them to let me accompany her: they accordingly took me to her there; and as they could not remain with me, they were glad to have me under the protection of a woman so well known and connected. She undertook the care of me very readily: I got lodgings in the same house with her; and we divided our expences, which I soon found, by her frugality, exactly suited her plans. I have great spirits; and my father and mother live in a very retired way in London; my health is not good, and I am glad to get away, for my home is very dull; and I am rather of an idle disposition, though I am ten years older than you suppose me. I have nothing to attach me. I want something to be fond of. It was to indulge and to amuse me, that my father and mother suffered me to leave home, though, I believe, I ought not to leave them, poor old souls! by themselves. But now to shew you what Mrs. Mammon is, let me give you one anecdote. While we were at Bognor, the military gave a ball, to which, as I love a little dress and dancing, I went. I asked Mrs. Mammon to go; but she declines, as not suited to her years, all amusements

ments of this kind ; and I could not be offended at her not breaking through a rule so respectable, for me. She assured me that in such a place, I wanted no *chaperon* ; so I resolved to go. I had a new dress ; she approved it, and I was pleased in having drest myself, as I thought, to advantage, without offending her ; in short, I took the sanction of such a woman for a passport every where. I went to the ball, and danced the two first dances, as I found afterwards, with the only gentleman in the room whose conduct made others shy of him. I perceived that something made every one keep aloof from me, even those of whom I had some knowledge, and whose notice I had promised myself ; and when I had gone down the two dances, no one asked me to dance again. My situation being very unpleasant, I went home very soon. I discovered by accident, the next morning, when I asked at the well what was known of the Mr. Dashwell I had danced with, what had been the cause of my vexation ; and I directly told it to Mrs. Mammon, who treated it very lightly, and said she would set it right ; but, to others, I have since found, she attributed this *mesalliance* to the impropriety of my dress, which, I have told you, she herself had approved. As we were near quitting the place, I passed this over, and strove to forget it. My next vexation was occasioned by the arrival of two ladies of her and my acquaintance, whom I know she allured to come to Bogner by the offer of joining families, and every attention in her power. They came, and I was rejoiced at it ; but

not needing them, as I was with her, she behaved to them in such a way, that I hardly dared speak to them; and she would have prevented my ever appearing with them, on the plea that they were not persons who would 'do her credit;' certainly they were precisely the same persons as when she made them give up another plan, for the sake of coming where she was.

'My next mortification was occasioned by my wish to return the civilities I had received with her. It was the fashion to give tea at the rooms, and as we had no accommodations at home, I proposed this; and she gladly assented. She concurred in all I said and did, on the subject, till she found I meant, as I supposed was right, to defray the expence ourselves: the option was, to let the waiter stand with a plate at the door, and collect shillings from our company. This, I thought, so very shabby, when the invitation was meant as a return of civility, that I opposed her, and informed her that, on the same plan as mine, there was another party that evening in the rooms; but this moved not her purse; and the next morning, referring to the matter, she asked me, very angrily, if I really intended to throw away five and twenty shillings in this manner: I told her I did; on which she replied, 'O! very well, my dear, then thank you for my tea.'

This was too contemptible to be more than laughed at. I could name you fifty other proofs of her spirit; but I will only say, we came hither, she having previously written to the first boarding-house here to know if it could receive us and our servants.

servants. She likes the plan of a boarding-house, because it leaves her at liberty to receive invitations, without obliging her to return any; and if I am but protected, it is indifferent to me. The house has been filling ever since we came; and yesterday we dined in a large miscellaneous company, two or three of whom she knew. One lady was just arrived, and being a fresh friend, she was very acceptable to Mrs. Mammon. To my great surprise, I saw them nod to each other, as soon as dinner was over, and quit the table. I made haste to finish my glass of wine; and supposing they were going to walk, I went to my room and equipt myself; but before I could be ready, they were out of the house. I followed, and soon coming up with them, I heard Mrs. Maminon say, ‘O! I left her, because I know she likes to sit with the gentlemen.’—I felt indignant, and was going to speak, when she turned round, quitted her companion, and making up her countenance, expressed her joy at my having come out to partake the sweet evening, and her great pleasure in my joining her. I had got so far as asking her how she could be so cruel as to leave me to all those strangers, when she began overwhelming me with sweet words; and I forgot my anger, though I felt my vexation. I see clearly,’ concluded Miss Strangeways, ‘how the matter stands. She accepted me gladly at Bognor, because she had nobody of her acquaintance under the same roof; and as her friends were not coming hither, she persuaded me to come here, because she might again be alone; but now this

lady is come, I may jump into the sea, if I chuse it.'

Gertrude was astonished at a sort of duplicity she had never yet found it necessary to be acquainted with. The '*audi alteram partem*' of Mr. Sterling, was hardly strong enough on her recollection, to prevent her blaming severely any one so failing in an undertaken duty; but considering that she had no right to judge or to pronounce sentence, she confined herself to pitying Miss Strangeways, and to offering her those attentions, in her calls on Lady Luxmore, or in their walks, which would prevent, at least, her feeling neglected.

The next morning, in her visit to Lady Elma, without betraying any thing which Miss Strangeways had confided to her, she mentioned her, as in her opinion unpleasantly situated, in a boarding-house. 'You must be cautious,' replied Lady Elma, 'in your notice of that little dashing woman: Mrs. Mammon has told me the trouble she has had with her at Bognor. She went to a ball by herself, with scarcely half a yard of clothes on, and danced with a man who had a mistress in the place; and she cut a beautiful new walking-dress into a fantastic form, to imitate a divorced woman, who came down with the man she had married, to figure at Bognor, and insult the decent people who resort to it.'

In her walk home, which the occupation of her mind made more slow-paced than usual, Gertrude had time to give way to the extreme vexation these contradictory reports produced. She

was,

was, like all the inexperienced on the stage of the world, completely embarrassed. ‘How can I learn, or whom can I trust,’ she asked, ‘if the second report I hear of every thing is thus inconsistent with the first? I can never be safe in pitying or assisting a sufferer, if I must expect to hear that they deserve neither pity nor assistance, I shall be perpetually doing injustice, under the idea and conceit of doing kindness. Had I followed the dictate of my own feeling, I should have almost hated Mrs. Mammon’s conduct; and now, perhaps, she ought to be regarded as a sufferer by the folly of her companion. Which of them ought I to take part with? I know not: on the whole, I think Miss Strangeways most in fault, because she has departed from that circumspection of conduct that becomes a woman, and she may have embarrassed her friend. But nothing, if it be true, can excuse Mrs. Mammon’s insincerity to her; nor can I forgive her leaving her at the table. How can I judge between them?—But stay, what occasion have I to judge?—What right have I to judge?—What licence have I to judge?—O! how wise! how safe! how kind is that precept which tells us we are *not* to judge!—It says, ‘Do not hurt yourself by attempting that which you can never accomplish.’ But if I am to get through the world safely, I must have prudence, and a little knowledge to save myself from the blame of supine imposition. O! what would I not give that dear Portargis had more experience than myself!—I love him, I hope, sincerely. I wish he were my brother; but we shall

shall certainly be ruined together : his good-nature will lay him open to every one ; he is precipitate ; and I shall have no power to assist him in distinguishing between what is proper and improper. If Lord Luxmore goes abroad, what shall I do?—I am afraid Lady Luxmore will be too angry to assist us. I know nothing we can do but keep at Luxmore, and then I shall be near Mr. Sydenham and Mrs. Brett ; but if Portargis is in the army, this will not be possible. I almost hope now, he will give it up ; yet to wish this, is wrong. O dear ! how strange it is that I see and feel all this, when I ought to be so thankful and so happy ! Perhaps I can rely on Lady Elma : if Portargis were but a few years older !—or if he had but the steadiness of —— !’ She hastened her steps at this moment, and met the earl and his son coming out of the house for their airing in the open carriage. Lord Luxmore was cool and dejected : his son would have preferred the companion at his hand ; but fate had arranged their plans ; and Gertrude was fortunately called by the countess to assist in some of the *petitesses* of her toilette for the evening, to the exclusion of her unavailing anxiety.

Let us now amuse ourselves, while poor Gatty is tacking on trimmings, and sewing in pearls, for Mrs. Lawless’s rout at next door, with improving our acquaintance with Mrs. Mammon, who, not from any great importance in our history, but as ‘matter of fact,’ deserves the attention of all those who, like our Gertrude, are subsiding into opinions.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mammon's exterior matters not: it was very much of the description of other persons: her manners were the most insinuating that can consist with a temper, of which all the good was factitious; but she could bear no thwarting: the least opposition brought her real character into her countenance; and had she not, by experiment, discovered that the world is no more inclined to be controled than she was, it would have appeared in more than her countenance; but with this knowledge of fact, she was so prudent as to adopt the 'suaviter in modo' whenever the 'fortiter in re' had for its stimulative, her own pleasure or advantage. Every one, therefore, was 'her dear' or 'her good,' or 'her excellent,' or 'her clever,' or 'her amiable,' or 'her charming.' It was 'my dear Lady' Mary; 'my good' Mrs. Sponge; 'my excellent' Sir Thomas; 'my clever' Mrs. Trimwell; 'my amiable,' Miss Dovekin; 'my charming' Anne Spanglefoot: a mode of address that, nine times in ten, made the hearers at least ape the character bestowed on them. To these testimonials of affection, were added the charms of seeming confidence, and the *sotto voce* behind the fan, the glove, or the muff, that told the present friend she, and she alone, was trusted; and so far did this plan succeed, that *young* persons, in particular, set Mrs. Mammon down; or rather *up* in their opinion, for the most delightful woman in the world, because she was so very affable.

In one point, her politeness a little obstructed the pleasure of those within hearing of the conversation.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mammon was so perfectly informed, on every subject, that not instantly to dismiss it, on her significant nods and winks, which were symptoms of previous acquaintance, would have been to hazard a repetition wearisome to her ; and as there was no one bold enough to say ; ‘ But *I* am ignorant ;’ and sometimes the propounder of a new topic was too modest to address another hearer, those who would have been gratified by accounts of distant places and manners, new discoveries in science or improvements in art, were starved, because Mrs. Mammon had had, as she professed, a previous meal of this untasted dish. This disposition to seem to know all *things*, included in itself the same omniscience with regard to *persons* ; and as to know without intimacy, would have been fruitless, and intimacy, without fondness, was impossible, every one she named, seemed her peculiar and bosom friend. She had her ‘ dear duchess,’ her ‘ dear Lady Anne,’ her ‘ dear’ of every rank ; and so familiar was the expression to her organs of speech, so readily did this adjective of kindness hang to her tongue, that she talked of ‘ the dear author of the *Iliad*,’ and was within half a semitone of saying ‘ my dear coachman.’ Appropriation was another figure in her rhetoric. One must have supposed that the New river water was turned to the offices of her house, especially and exclusively : the church and the parson were, by her modes of appellation, converted into her chapel and chaplain : one step farther would have made the Thames and its bridges the decorations of her pleasure-grounds,

grounds, and the shops of Bond-street, her drawers, and dressing-tables. 'I have been to-day,' said she, 'to my favorite lounge, the Stafford gallery: upon my word, it satisfies me; though I wish my dear Poussins were in a better light. Nay, even the royal anniversaries could not escape. She always went to 'her dear St. James's' on her 'favorite birth-day;' and 'My good king' was one of her daily expressions.

The same conduct, with scarcely a shade of difference, suited her superiors and her equals. To her inferiors, where nothing was to be gained, and where she was not afraid of their revenge, she was a very different personage; there, she had no disguise; there, and there alone, she was honest; and certainly if any class of persons respected her integrity, it must have been those who suffered from the peevish ill-humor which she reserved for servants, tradesmen, and clamorous mendicants.

Of her birth, nothing was known but that it took place under the influence of some very fortunate planet; and it had occurred so long before, that few remembered to have heard of it. As she never spoke of it, we may infer that it was not illustrious. In the discharge of relative duties, she had not been deficient; but her attentions were conducted with a sort of *management*, that left little to be said about their merits. In marrying, she had first suffered herself, at a very early period of life, to be transferred to a man co-eval with her grandfather, for the sake of an increase of indulgences; and when she chose afterwards for herself, she had the
good

good fortune to find a man precisely her counterpart. Their very marriage-articles declared their consentaneous qualities; for their pecuniary concerns were arranged with a fractional accuracy and a legal dexterity, that made it impossible for either to gain or lose by the bargain. In educating a numerous family of children, one department only had she taken on herself; and this was 'the science of the world,' in which she had made them such proficient, that, like the scholars of antiquity, they could fence with their teacher, and not despair of applause or of victory.

If it be asked to what purposes could a female use the astuteness, and the attention to self-interest, which Mrs. Mammon possessed, be it known that, having a moderate jointure, she contrived to live by her wits, better than others, of double her wealth, by their purses. She had a good house, well-furnished, and all the appointments of a gentlewoman. She kept her servants on board-wages, dined out as often as possible, and pleaded the tyranny of her household, who, by chusing to provide for themselves, deprived her of the 'pleasure of asking a friend to dine.' She could make a couple of chairmen go as far as a pair of horses, and a pair of horses, *not her own*, do, in one day, the work of three days. She did every thing by contract that could be contracted for, and all on the lowest terms, consequently her axle-tree often broke on the road, or the departure of a wheel occasionally spilt her on the pavement. She admired the handiworks of young females, in a way that made many
simpletons

simpletons offer her their labors, which she would requite by something of *imputed* value, dragged out of the hoards of her youth, or the gleanings of a legacy; and where papas and mammas kept carriages and went journies or frequented sights, Mrs. Mamimon was particularly fond of their ‘clever’ sons, or their ‘amiable’ daughters. Wishing to be admitted into a party for races or reviews, she would overcome the resolution of any of her acquaintance not to enter into the amusement; and if they were not as firm as herself, she accomplished their going and carrying her. Tasting an agreeable wine at any one’s house, she would ask the owner of it to let her ‘have a few bottles of it,’ and there were persons who did not know that such concessions could be refused to ‘a woman of her connections.’ But once repulsed, as she merited, she would spare no expression of her resentment:—but once given to understand that she was seen through, she had not another trump to lead; she would then take, with the most perfect Christian patience, an honest objection to what she said, implying that it wanted foundation, in truth; and she soon found it was fencing with a left-handed person, to attempt a communication of ideas with ‘that extraordinary young woman, Miss Aubrey.’

In truth, she puzzled poor Gertrude, and consequently did not gain on her good opinion: we love nothing we cannot comprehend: but in Lady Luxmore, she found all that such friendship can bestow on such friends; and too liberal to keep for her own consumption all the delights of this new intimacy,

intimacy, she introduced to the countess as many as she could draw with her, of her train of flatterers and imitators: an accession of connexion so valuable and so relished, that Lady Luxmore's drawing-room became the fashion; and another dozen of chairs were hired for their accommodation, while the earl, now satiated with nonsense, and every day less disposed to relish it, shrunk from the *coteries*, and tried to wear away the time for which the house was taken, in a separate room and separate amusement.

Of these 'friendly ladies,' and 'vastly agreeable chatty women,' one was the honorable Mrs. Eglantine Tamis, a spinster, not more than seventy years of age, of independent fortune and an old family; and who, professing a taste *similiar* to Miss Aubrey's, seemed disposed to transfer a part of her regard from the countess to her dependent.

Mrs. Eglantine Tamis had received the common 'best education,' of the days of her youth; she had 'read Clarissa,' and 'learnt flourishing.' Wicked Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson, indeed, contended that her gait must have been acquired under one of the anserine tribe. Of painting, she knew enough to be confident that her great aunt learnt it, either of Apelles or Sir Godfrey Kneller, she could not, indeed, justly say which; but she was sure it was one. 'You do not mean Sir Peter Lely,' said Mr. Reynardson, in a tone that asked for 'Yes, but I do.' 'No, no,' said Mrs. Eglantine, 'Apelles or Sir Godfrey Kneller.' Of music, she had heard almost from the time of Pe-
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pusch and his Margarita; and she could remember the days when she could play Handel's 'Water-music' on the spinnet, and had sung 'Fairest isle' to one of the royal family; but reading, reading! was now her delight, and when her tongue was not employed on the annals of queen Caroline's court, of which her mother had been the *belle*, or on decrying all modern customs and fashions, it descanted at large, for it was all matter of general recollection, on the book that happened to be under her perusal. — 'My dear young miss,' said she one day when she had poked poor Gertrude into a corner for a little *confab*, as she termed it, — 'you are very clever, I perceive; and to tell you the truth, I think we want clever people who will let us have a little of their cleverness. I don't at all wish to be learned, or to seem so; I think it very unbecoming in a woman, especially in a female; but yet there are some things that one likes to know. Now can you tell me, is Sicily a town?'

Start not, good reader: do not presume to cry out 'too bad; improbable, impossible,' for the matter is fact, and only a very little qualified:—it loses in the qualification.—And it is not many hours since we heard a lady, equally related to Mrs. Mammon and Mrs. Tamis, assert with every assurance short of perjury, that her daughter stopt at Ely, in her way from Berkeley-square to Falmouth.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A great evil in morals. A prudent lover. Fashionable attentions. Communication without confidence. A woman of vivacity. An appointed mistress. A grave soliloquy. Whispered slander. A painful idea. A vain attempt. A raffle.

ACQUAINTED as we fancy ourselves with the world, we are often compelled to own the deficiency of our information ; but the love of knowledge, and the impulse which we feel to search after truth, make us most humbly and thankfully receive the lessons, sometimes not of the pleasantest description, bestowed on us. When we have lamented, in places of public retreat from London, where the fashion has indeed declined, the uniform evening occupation of playing cards, as paralysing the efforts of a rising generation, we have been answered that, even admitting it an imperfect system of rational amusement, it has its advantages, as it prevents, we will not say, in common phrase, *scandal*; but *the discussion of the affairs of others*. The German writer, Zimmermann, has, by an odd sort of deduction, made it clear that this prying curiosity in ourselves, and this disposition to communicate to others, arise from a social anxiety which, as he treats it, appears not only excusable but almost laudable. We cannot think with him ; nor,

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on the other hand, can our own experience convince us that a passion for a frivolous amusement is any security against the evil of which he makes so light. On the contrary, we are satisfied, that in changing soil, we change not ourselves, and that if we go to Bath, Brighton, Weymouth, Tunbridge, or any other, still more crowded place, with a habit of *discussing our fellow-creatures*, neither cards nor dissipation of any kind, will make us virtuous in forbearance.

We would most willingly give up every praise, every encouragement that can be bestowed on our present labors; we would ourselves distribute our leaves for the wrapping of cheese, and the defence of penny-pies, could we effect, any otherwise than by censure, the great, the important, the conscientious purpose of frowning into shame this intolerable, this increasing, this disgraceful vice of exposing the failings of our fellow-creatures without necessity. What is disclosed in resentment, may plead some, though a wretched, excuse: what is merited by moral turpitude, it is not always fit to withhold from the observation of the inexperienced; but it is for the good, if not for the innocent, that we plead; it is strange to say, it is to the good that we address ourselves.

What we would abolish does not amount to detraction; of that we speak on another occasion:—it is the presuming to report on imperfect evidence: it is the daring to judge, after we have heard the command, JUDGE NOT,—against which we remonstrate. Were the fault that offends us, confined to any rank, we could quote those which

are free from it; but whether the matter of discussion be the œconomy of poor little Scammony the apothecary's family, or the training of Marquis Altitude's young lords and ladies, the practice is the same; and Mrs. Scammony and Marchioness Altitude requite it in kind. Nor is it a vicious propensity confined to years or any particular standing: our *young* friends well-born, well-educated, well-gifted, are, in many instances, tainted with it, and a governess walks with elegant girls, while their eyes make an inventory of our equipments, to carry home to Mama, and out again to their acquaintance *for discussion*; and in process of time, we hear news of ourselves, on points which we should have thought beneath the notice of liberal minds. We have been entertained, in some of the best neighborhoods of the metropolis, with a commentary on the clothes worn by a bride during the first month of her appearance; and perhaps some feeling of self-concern sharpens the acuteness of the lovely Lady Bellanges, when they are so well informed on the engagements and views of every officer in the *six-hundred and forty-second*: curiosity must precede information. Our *discussing-party* first listen and enquire, then guess, decide, and report; and should a novice come in the way of these *common informers*, we must laugh or be angry. Who gives balls; how those balls were given; the means for giving those balls; and the views that prompt those balls, are radii of one point that illuminate the intellect of speaker and hearer; and Mrs. Filter, when she has been elo-

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quent for half an hour, thinks the silence of her hearer the tribute due to the knowledge she has imparted. 'Lady Eggshell,' said the good lady to us, crossing our path in a crowded room; 'will give no more balls now; the plot is hatched; the last of her daughters is married off: no more balls now.'

We give this, only as one in ten-thousand instances ; but here allow us to ask : what right has Mrs. Filter or Mrs. Any-one to judge what is the view of another in following the custom of the world? Lady Eggshell might have her views ; or she might be teased into indulging her daughters ; or she might think it right to return civilities received ; or she might not know what to do with a vacant evening ; but even were Mrs. Filter included in the invitations, she cannot tell the *motive* on which they are given ; and when she details all this trumpery of her own conceiving, let her recollect that she is exposing herself to the ridicule of Lady Eggshell's friends, to her own shame ; and if she tells it to one newly associated in the party, she gives an impression that perhaps it is as difficult to overcome, as to forget the hand from which it was received.—To the whole family of Filter, to all their alliances and connections, we beg to offer an humble request, that they would cease from insidious flatteries, abstain from prying and forming conclusions, and remember that JUDGE NOT is a command of as much force, and the breach of it as cognisable by Divine Justice, as *Thou shalt not steal*.—Let us hear no more of incomes and ex-

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penditures in the peerage of 'flirtations and arrangements, among commoners, nor even of *the thoughts* of the Princesses, however gratifying the revelation may be, to all who love to hear of good affections and good deeds. It is safer, and not more disgusting, to be told of the progress and cure of a disease, if, unfortunately, we cannot discuss the merits of 'Marmion' and 'Wallace,' and have no anecdotes of private goodness, to bring forward for the amusement of a friend.

It was Gertrude's lot always to hear much of that discussion we here reprobate, and which we can scarcely listen to innocently; and, at Brighton, the source did not seem to have failed. Obligated sometimes to reply, and tempted at others to laugh, she felt uncomfortable in the retrospect of an hour spent in that which profest to be nothing more than idle, and began to be persuaded that they are most fortunate who see the least of the world: that which existed by the sea-side, puzzled her at every step; and rare were those accessions of intimacy which formed exceptions; some, however, there were; and to these she felt duly grateful.

The viscount's conduct towards her had become precisely what she could have wished: he was much engaged, and was quoted, in a way she could not disapprove, as the youthful shadow of Lady Elma de Ruse. He was somewhat vain of the distinction; and Gertrude regarding his advantage and her own ease, piqued his pride in retaining his situation; but he still returned to the object of his more serious attachment with pleasure, and grew more

more and more anxious for the time when they should escape from Brighton, though at present he knew not what was to succeed it, as Gertrude would suffer no arrangement, and the earl now never mentioned the subject of his son's views, except as connected with the army. The only wish Portargis dared utter to her, was for a garden, and the absence of his mother, that he might be allowed to walk with 'dear Gatty' unobserved; and he talked with enthusiasm of 'those happy days' which were to set him down for life, the most envied of mortals. The felicity of coming of age, now within a few weeks of his grasp, seemed lost in the ideas that occupied him.

With his friend Reynardson, whom Gertrude recommended still more to his favor by expressing her obligation to him, he lived in intimacy, but without confidence; for his lordship, on almost the verge of matrimony and of majority, seemed beginning to think before he acted or spoke; and his increasing sedateness, so far from being unbecoming, gave, if the judgment of the young ladies was to be trusted, 'a most delightful interesting character' to him: he rode, he walked, he sailed with all the beauties of the place, without exciting the jealousy of Gertrude, who was entirely omitted; and not even recalling to her recollection the lovely lines,

'O! free for ever be his eye,

'Whose heart to me is always true.'

Domesticated with the De-Hauteforts, and their

good passive mother, Lady Waveney, by consequence admitted to the familiarity of Sir Philip Lorimer, who seemed to make the countess's house his hotel, while suffering himself to be distinguished by Lady Paula, he was of all their parties: in these 'the jumble of atoms' made it often his fate to drive Lady Caroline; and he composed little poetic trifles, which Gertrude corrected, and he sent them to various young ladies, in return for those odd presents which, somehow or other,—how, it is difficult to ascertain,—our females of high fashion think it decorous to make to fashionable young men.

Gertrude was sometimes surprised; but she never commented: it was sufficient for her, that Portargis had taken up the whim of calling her 'my little wise sister Gatty.' She was quite satisfied: and the earl seemed to relish the fancy; though he did not follow it up by saying, 'my little good daughter Gatty.' She was now with him, rarely, 'Gertrude;' almost uniformly 'Miss Aubrey.'

But Miss Aubrey danced in a net; and—poor silly girl!—fancied herself invisible. She did not know that Mr. Reynardson was still persuaded of his friend the viscount's attachment, that Lady Elma was not perfectly satisfied that she had secured his best assiduities, that Lady Caroline de Hautefort had made her election, that Lady Paula, to gain her sister's concurrence in her views on Sir Philip, had promised every assistance, that Mrs. Mammon, merely for the love of match-making, was trying

trying to talk up something like a supposed attachment between Portargis and Lady Caroline, or that, with the exception of Lady Elma, who participated with no one in her conquests, there was a general communication between the persons we have mentioned.

None of this escaped Lady Elma's sagacity; nor was she reserved in denying every assertion respecting her friend Miss Aubrey, with whose most retired thoughts she boasted herself intrusted, or in setting forth, by a sort of inuendo, the hopelessness of pretensions, where any one of the family of De Ruse had a claim, natural or prescriptive, or acquired. But with this facility of communication there was no trust:—not one of the party complimented the other by any reliance on tried, or imputed integrity;—each thought and acted for him and herself; and Gertrude seemed the only person who had no interest in the discussion.

Not to be wanting, however, in circumspection, Lady Elma, in her interviews with her young favorite, now and then, treated her with a surmise or a report, as if proving from day to day, the strength of a fortress she suspected under siege; but Gertrude always resorted to her own danger of dismissal, and the loss of her daily bread; and it must have been a curiosity and an interest destitute of all common compassion, that had pursued the subject at such a risk.

‘And now,’ said her ladyship, one morning, in walking

walking with Gertrude, and when she had pushed the topic quite as far as good manners warranted, ‘do let me speak to you about something more important than all this silly chat:——I am, really, very uneasy for that little simpleton, Miss Strangersways. Mrs. Mammon is, indeed, using her very cruelly; she neglects her entirely, except in company where she does not want her notice, and leaves her to form her own connections. I met her this morning, walking at some distance with a very gay man. Do give her a little good advice: she will listen to *you*; and it is not a business *I* can interfere in: *I* should draw all the men about me. If you could walk with her before breakfast, it would be a great comfort to her, and perhaps save her from some indiscretion that would make her ridiculous; it is then I am particularly anxious for her; in the middle of the day, every body’s movements are known.’

The value of Gertrude’s hour before breakfast, was too great to allow of her sacrificing it willingly, even to this purpose, as Portargis made a point of bestowing it on her Latin studies; but obliged as she was to Lady Elma, and not daring to name Lord Portargis as an obstacle, she had no alternative to oppose to obedience. She began to dislike, more than ever, the modes and habits of a place which needed such watchfulness, and led to such basenesses; she could not but ask herself what became of the mind when the morals occupied so much of its attention: ‘It is attempting to dance on ice,’ thought she, ‘where all grace must be sacrificed

crificed to self-preservation. However, it is my duty to aid a fellow-creature, if the aid be even imaginary. I must try to change my poor Latin hour. But what is it in *my* power to do for Miss Strangeways? if a woman, by her own confession, not *very* young, cannot conduct herself, what am I to do? She ought rather to be *my* guide. It reminds me of the time when I learnt to dance, and was always set to practice with those who had no ear. I must comfort my vanity with taking it for a compliment, to be trusted.'

On the importance of the trust to which she was then called, she could perhaps judge, even more correctly than Lady Elina, who certainly did not think too deeply, in fearing only that Miss Strangeways would make herself *ridiculous*. This little lively being, who had a vast deal to attract, and scarcely any thing to attach, had, with a precipitancy of adhesion, clung to Gertrude, because Gertrude was the first prop she had found : the continuance of her dependence; did her more credit than its commencement; for her love was not unmingled with fear. Gertrude was of a class so far above her, that she might have been excused had she shunned and hated her; but aware of some part of her superiority, and seeing, still more clearly, that she had the least presumption of any young woman she had ever known, she not only respected her for what she could not well understand, but she felt grateful for what came to her comprehension in the form of condescending kindness. A glimmering of perception now and then crossed her mind, that virtue and good sense were not the spontaneous productions

tions of Brighton ; and being very fashionable, and at the same time, very peculiar in her fashions, she prized Gertrude's friendship, not only for the worth, but the singularity of its character.

Gertrude, it is true, was very ignorant of the practice of the world, as it stands ; but she knew, with tolerable accuracy, what it ought to be ; and aware of her disadvantages, she, without obstinacy, conceit, or pretension, conformed, in all things indifferent, to what she saw the custom of others. She would have been much astonished had she ever heard, as she might have done, that her manners were accounted ' perfect,' that she was called ' a very superior young woman,' and that when Miss Newlove admired a walking-bonnet at Mrs. Gossamer's, for having, as she said, ' more good sense' in it than any she had seen, the artificer replied, that ' it was the exact pattern of Miss Aubrey's,' for she had ' borrowed it of her woman' for the purpose.

It was as well that Gertrude should not know this. She was in no danger ; for as the men presumed not to flatter her, the women neither *quizzed* her, nor said distressing things to her face. She went on, very quietly, in the performance of her duties, very attentive to the countess, whenever she was in a humor to be attended to, offering her services to the earl, and, if possible, anticipating his wishes : keeping the family-accounts, and making the most of every moment she could steal, for her own pursuits, by the sacrifice of sleep and curiosity and sea-side habits. On Sundays, as was
the

the fashion, she went with the family to chapel, and thinking always, on that day peculiarly, of good Lady Mary Sydenham, she endeavored to keep it distinct from the rest of the week: her six days' diligence made rest a grateful vicissitude; and she found that when she had been, all the week, drawing on her faculties for their exertions, the calm of Sunday was medicine to her mind: and however the idea may have been despised as that of presbyterian superstition, she could, on her own recollections and feelings, assert, that the week never passed so well as when the first day was well spent. 'And why should it not be so?' she asked: our tempers, when we cease to be children, depend, in a considerable degree, on the discipline of our minds: Sunday is a day designed for calling ourselves to order; and on the same principle, that whatever has been re-adjusted looks to more advantage, whatever we have attempted to correct must be somewhat better for the attempt: we are pleased with our intentions, even if they have small effects, and encouraged by our endeavors, if ever so little perceptible: our self-satisfaction which, if duly controlled, is innocent and useful, communicates itself to our spirits: we feel braced to new exertion; and under this influence, can certainly do more than when dejected by conscious negligence, and distracted by not knowing whereabouts we are on the ocean of existence.'

'These intervals of leisure,' said she, when sitting alone, and looking on the placid expanse before her—these intervals:—O! how long shall I preserve

preserve them?—In my new situation, I shall need some one, perhaps, to remind me when it is Sunday. I may forget that I want protection and correction, when I cease to be indigent and dependent. I may forget that I must die, because I feel it pleasant to live, and that I am an accountable creature, because others serve and flatter me. I must, therefore, make it an obstinate rule to keep Sunday as clear as I can, for my mind's holiday. I will reserve, if possible, in each day of my life a quarter of an hour, when I can shut myself into some little snug room alone, and pause: it is very necessary for those who wish not to have long accounts to settle. I fear Portargis will take some training to get into good habits; but I do not despair, if I can rest satisfied in using gentle means. It is the business of a woman to influence to what is good, not to compel to quit what is not so. I may gain the victory; but I must not fight for it. How hard! how very hard, that I must set out in life, to correct, where I might have hoped for correction!

She had told Lord Luxmore what had passed respecting Miss Strangeways; and he concurred in Lady Elma's idea. He thought this giddy woman needed control, but doubted whether the task ought to have devolved on Gertrude, though he was convinced, he said, no one could be so fit, and he approved *particularly* the plan of their walking together before breakfast. She did not ask his lordship 'Why?'—she *thought* she knew—she imagined

gined she had heard it from Lady Elma. No, Gertrude, no.

It was not difficult to increase her intimacy with one who always looked on the being joined by Miss Aubrey, as a favor. The morning-walks began; but Gertrude in a very few days, saw with great concern, Miss Strangeways perpetually guilty of some imprudence which served Mrs. Mainmon to detail, but which she never offered to correct. Notwithstanding all her approbation of Gertrude's deportment and opinions, and her acquiescence in all her sentiments, while they were together, there was cause to fear that the moment of their separation was that of welcome liberty to Miss Strangeways, and that to dress and exhibit for admiration, to prattle with the military, and to go to those extremes of innocence which confine on the borders of guilt, were her amusements. She danced round a fire; she was delighted with the blaze and the effect on her trappings, perhaps unconscious that she might be scorched, but certainly not safe from danger; and Gertrude had just settled herself in the post assigned her, when she heard it hinted that Miss Strangeways was not believed to be a respectable woman.

It was Mrs. Eglantine Tamis who, in great kindness, whispered this to Gertrude, and advised her not to be seen too much with her. Though uninfluenced herself by a surmise to which she gave not an atom of belief, Gertrude felt most painfully for the predicament in which it placed her; and grievous was it to her, to renounce the quietest hour

hour the day afforded her, and with it a pursuit on which none but those like herself, could know how ardently she had set her affections, to involve herself with the folly of a stranger; for the viscount either had no other hour to bestow, or he was beginning to be weary of his employment. When she spoke to him on the subject, he replied, with expressions of civil regret, and hopes of more favorable opportunities: he wondered Lady Elma should have proposed this plan, as he was sure she knew how that time of the day was occupied. Gertrude accepted his apologies, and promised to wait his leisure, or to endeavor at her own emancipation: ‘If I could get rid of this horrible walking,’ said she, meeting him as she was setting out: ‘will you go on then?’—‘O! certainly, certainly, if you wish it—and think it worth while.’

Gertrude looked at him: she paused: an idea—a very painful one, came into her mind: she dared not offer it a moment’s hospitality. ‘Thy will be done,’ said she, when she had passed him, and pulling the door after her by the knocker, saw only the Heaven of her hopes, and the abyss that seemed ready to receive them. ‘Courage, fool,’ she said to herself; ‘the greatest events of this life are but those ships in the distance; in sight now, out of sight a few hours hence; but that remains which I must seek, that is obvious to me which I must shun: the sparrows are protected.’

‘Good morning, dearest Miss Aubrey,’ said Miss Strangeways, coming to meet her.

Gertrude’s mind was instantly recalled to the
present

present duty. She had decided, while preparing to come out, that the least relaxation of her attention to Miss Strangeways, would be equivalent to traducing her as she had heard her traduced, and that to communicate what she had heard, and which she had begged Mrs. Tamis not to broach any wider, till she could ascertain the fact, would be to give the death-blow to the reputation she wished to save. But for this necessary caution, she would have waited a few hours to consult Lady Elma. There were but two paths, she saw, for the libelled lady; the one was to quit the place, the other was to prevail on her father and mother to join her; and to put her in the way to do the one or the other, it was necessary to tell her explicitly what she had heard. When she had hinted to Mrs. Tamis this plan of proceeding, it had, 'of course,' shocked her excessively: she thought it 'the most uncommon, the most violent way of proceeding in the world;'—'such a thing was never *herd* of, as telling a person what had been said against them;' and, 'far be it from her, to take upon her to say it was true;' she 'only gave it as she received it.' 'God knew, she was the farthest removed in the world from a gossip:'—'she thought Miss Strangeways an exceeding pretty *amenable* kind of woman, very well for her station in life: she doubted, indeed, whether she was a woman of birth; but that was not her fault, poor thing!—but she hoped Miss Aubrey would not do so *extraordinary* a thing, as to go and tell her what she had said.'

'Certainly not, madam,' replied Gertrude, 'I should

‘should not presume to use your name; but I am surprised to hear it is extraordinary to warn a person, when they are accused of that of which it is not certain they are guilty. I should think it is the only way by which we can have an opportunity of proving our innocence.’

‘O! far from it, my dear: it only makes the matter worse: the best way is to let the thing die away of itself.’

‘But how can it die, if it is incessantly reported?’

‘O! it must take its chance for that: people will, you know, speak: there is no stopping tongues.’

‘I am very ignorant on the subject; but I can hardly give up my idea that it is the fairest way to tell a person, when they are accused and we do not believe they merit it.’

‘Well! you must take your own way: you are very clever, you know; and doctors differ: but my plan is always, ‘Do to others as you’d be done by;’ and peace and quietness.’

Argument, such as this, had not moved Gertrude. She felt it impossible for her to stand up the champion of an imprudent woman; but she saw, very plainly, that she could put it in her power to clear herself; and she meant, by very gentle degrees, to lead to it in this morning’s walk. But the morning was inviting; and every time she began to speak, some one or other joined them. Miss Strangeways, as soon as they were alone, by new complaints of Mrs. Mammion’s neglect, led to the subject, and declaring herself desperate, Gertrude
asked

asked her if she would not be happier at home. To this she replied, with the true characteristic inconsistency of a frivolous woman, saying, 'it was not *quite* so serious as that, and if it did not grow worse, she must try to bear it.'

'A new lesson for me,' thought poor Gertrude. 'Just now, she was miserable beyond endurance; and now it is not *quite* so serious. What am I to understand?—She cannot take a hint:—I must speak out. Perhaps, if I had said the thing was trifling, she would have thought it important.—— I am afraid you will find yourself embarrassed.'

'Embarrassed? how!—O! I know what you mean. I told you, I remember, that Mrs. Trimwell had asked me for the money for my dresses to make up a payment: it was, indeed, a monstrous impertinent thing of her: but I have only to send my bills to my father: he is very liberal.'

'The embarrassment I mean, is of a very different kind. I understood you expected Mr. and Mrs. Strangeways; and I fear if they do not come soon, you will find yourself uncomfortable.'

'Why, my dear child, how, in the name of patience, is that to embarrass me? If they cannot come, they cannot; and what's that to me?—they must do as they like, poor old souls! but they could not make Mrs. Mammon more civil.'

'True; but they would lessen the importance of her being so.'

After all, I believe it's only that I am very silly, and make myself uneasy for nothing. But I see Captain Trenchwell coming, on the other side the way.

way. I think it's he; but I'm so short-sighted; and I havn't my glass. I must go up to him, to ask him about the raffle: it's a beautiful gold chain; and I know half a dozen more that I want to get into it, to see if they are bears enough to keep it, if they win it. Will you join us?—only half a guinea each, and twenty names!—good morning; just for this once; we shall meet again soon.'

'A good chance,' said Gertrude, I should stand! I thank you, I never raffle; it would in no way suit me.'

The last six words Miss Strangeways certainly did not hear: she was on the other side of the road before they were uttered, and Gertrude saw her, with a hand in each of the captain's, looking up in his face, in the way best calculated to try the effects of her eyes.

CHAPTER LXIV.

A delicate business. The idle captain. The advisers. A right decision. Questions and answers. A busy-body. Match-making. Warring love. Vicious connections recommended. A quotation. The vigilant coquette.

IN a very different attitude, and with very different feelings, with downcast eyes, her arms hanging perpendicularly, and unconsciously measuring her steps, Gertrude returned to the Marine Parade, and was entering the house, when she met Lord Luxmore coming out, alone and on foot: it was his first attempt at walking without support; and she could not refuse, when he asked her to take a few turns before the door with him.

She felt it out of her power to amuse him: she could only express her pleasure at seeing him walk again, and observe on the fineness of the morning: her mind was filled with the folly of Miss Strangeways; and feeling that she had been most unfortunately interrupted in her intentions, she meditated on the possibility of obtaining an interview with her in the course of the forenoon.

‘ You are not in spirits, my fair friend,’ said the earl. ‘ I hope you are not ill; you have walked too far; you look jaded. Upon my honor, Gertrude, you do too much. What? have you been walking with that little painted gig?—I do not think

think she is a proper companion for you to be seen with : she can, indeed, do you no harm, and you may do her a great deal of good ; but you must not expect wonders : I am afraid she is not worth much. Lady Luxmore begins to think her not very correct ; and Mrs. Mammon will be desperate in a day or two, if her family do not take her off her hands.'

This was a fair opening to a conversation which Gertrude could not wish to shun. She represented to the earl what appeared to her the arguments in favor of Miss Strangeways ; and, admitting much, she exculpated her from more than her share of blame : she moreover stated the frank means she meant to pursue.

His lordship thought these little less extraordinary than they had appeared to Mrs. Tamis ; but not being very well able to specify his objections, his respectful prepossession in favor of the projector, made him give credit to the project. He therefore did not oppose her wish to see Miss Strangeways alone ; and he allowed her to send one of the men, with a note, requesting her to receive her after breakfast.

An open answer was returned immediately. It told her how 'most happy' Miss Strangeways would be to see her dear Miss Aubrey to whom she was 'so infinitely *obligated*,' that 'she guessed the private business was the charming gold chain ; that she had been again to look at it ; and thought it more beautiful than ever, that she rejoiced to inform her, that one single name alone was wanting,
and

and that she should *order* Captain Trenchwell, *on pain of her displeasure*, to keep that place for Miss Aubrey.'

'As soon as she had performed the duties of the breakfast-table, and arranged the family-concerns, Gertrude set off for the boarding-house, where Miss Strangeways was to be found. Breakfast was over, and the party dispersed; and she was shewn to the drawing-room, where, on a sopha behind the door, with her feet laid up on it, and her back reclining against the end, sat, as if on purpose to exhibit her new nankeen-boots to the admiring eyes of Captain Trenchwell, the lady she sought; while the captain, with one arm resting on the near end of the sopha, and the other occasionally laid over his head and reaching far enough to keep in vibration the clanking appendage of the bell-rope, was enjoying the prospect, and meditating the ensuing campaign.

'O here she comes!' said Miss Strangeways as she entered; 'now, my dear Miss Aubrey, your half-guinea, and the business is done: Trenchwell will go with you to see the chain and to throw. I shall almost rejoice in losing, if you are the winner:—you are so good!'

'No, no;' said Gertrude, 'I have no goodness; you have misunderstood me; I want no chains.'

'Monstrous good, faith!—ha, ha, ha!—want no chains!—O! how good!—I shall die with laughing.—I must give up the ghost;' said the very merry captain, putting his arm behind him by way

of cross-bar, as if to save his whole frame from giving way under his laughter.

‘ Have I said any thing very absurd ?’ said Gertrude to the lady.

‘ O ! no, my dear madam ; no, indeed,’ replied the captain ; ‘ pardon me, far from *absurd*, I assure you ; every body must agree with you ; you want no chains ; no, faith !—never heard a better thing in my life, by Jove !’

‘ Will you allow me to speak to you in your own room ?’ said she to Miss Strangeways.

‘ Can’t you speak here ?’ answered the foolish woman. ‘ What ?’ has Trenchwell discomfited you with his nonsense ?—come, don’t mind him—he’s not very terrible ; and he’ll ask me all you’ve said when you’re gone ; and I don’t know how to tell a lie—never could in my life—not even when the men asked me, if I thought myself handsome. Come, come ; I know you are shy—I’ll help you out.’

‘ It would be cruel to obey you,’ said Gertrude.

‘ Cruel ?—Lord ! my dear, you’re quite *fine* this morning. I vow I know nothing about all this. Well ! I suppose I must withdraw with you.—Stay, till I come back, Trench ; I shan’t be long.’

‘ No, ’pon honor can’t stay ; parade in fifteen minutes,’ said the laconic captain.

With a little more intreaty, Gertrude prevailed on Miss Strangeways to leave the room with her ; and having reached her little slip of a bed-room, she, in a whisper, tenderly reprovèd her for her exuber-

ance

ance of spirits, which had almost hindered her from saying what she came purposely to say, and then seriously remonstrated on the extreme impropriety of sitting down alone, and in so very indecorous a manner, with any gentleman. The culprit being much inclined to take her own part, Gertrude was driven to her last resource, and frankly, but mercifully, told her, in what manner her character and connections were questioned.

This silly woman, like many who have fallen victims to similar folly, had said to her's, 'Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther,' and knew not that neither the waves of the sea, nor those, more destructive, of the passions, will stop for any one's bidding. She was astonished, and she was shocked, when she heard she was suspected: her color, at least all her color that could fly, fled; she trembled, she wept, and she begged Gertrude to tell her how she could escape from the misery she saw before her.

'By immediate prudence,' said Gertrude. 'If you run away after what has passed, I am afraid you will only confirm the supposition. Were it my case, I would write to my friends. Cannot you urge Mr. and Mrs. Strangeways to come down to you? if it were but for an hour, it would rescue you. Write to them directly. Throw your letter, when you have written it, on the most conspicuous table in the house, and wait the event quietly. If Mr. Strangeways is indeed detained, ask your mother to come to you.'

'A thousand

‘ A thousand thanks : I will, I will. Do stay with me while I write. Tell me what to say ?’

‘ I am sorry I cannot do that. But before you write, perhaps it would be but a proper compliment to Mrs. Mammon to take her opinion. I do not wish you to reveal what I have said ; but you could say that you feel it uncomfortable to be here without Mr. or Mrs. Strangeways. I must tell you ingenuously, that I know what her answer will be ; for she has said she wished them here. Pray ask her ?’

‘ I hate her for being so silent and so smooth. I care not for her opinion : I will not ask her.’

‘ But, for my sake, do ; it looks so presuming in me to advise—pray, pray do ask her whether their presence would not place you in a more respectable situation.’

‘ Well ! to please you I will do it, if you will stay till I return.’

Gertrude complied. Miss Strangeways was away about five minutes. She came back with a countenance that her adviser could not translate. ‘ This is *the world*,’ said she, ‘ lifting up her hands and eyes. Mrs. Mammon is astonished at my uneasiness—she tells me she never wished me to have any other protection than hers—she is delighted with the charge, it is a pleasure, an honor ; she begs I will not think of troubling Mr. or Mrs. Strangeways. Now, Miss Aubrey, what do you say to this ?’

‘ Only, that if you obey her, I cannot blame you.’

‘ I am

‘ I am puzzled. I can’t tell who’s right and who’s wrong: perhaps, if she had said less, I should have believed her : *you* have never deceived me ; *she* has. I will write as you advise.’

‘ I cannot ask such confidence. But tell me, was this all that Mrs. Mammion said?’

‘ Yes, I believe so—except indeed that she depended on my company to Bath.’

‘ Well! you will do as you please now.’

‘ O! I shall write certainly.’

Gertrude left her sitting down to her employment; and, in finding her way out of the house, she saw, leaning on a window in a passage that separated the drawing-room from the other apartments, Captain Trenchwell. She wished to pass him slightly noticed; but this not being his wish, he stopt her, and in a manner very different from what he had assumed half an hour before, he requested to speak to her, holding the drawing-room door open, as if expecting her to enter it. ‘ Here is nobody in this room,’ said he: ‘ will you let me speak three words to you, Miss Aubrey?’

‘ Certainly,’ she replied; ‘ but as Lady Elma de Ruse is perhaps waiting for me, you will do me a favor by saying what you wish, as I walk towards her house.’

He followed down the stairs, and in the street began:—‘ What is the reason? Miss Aubrey—he took out his handkerchief, and having used it most violently, he began again—Why, Miss Aubrey, do you seem to be?—why do you appear?—I think you seem so shy of me, Miss Aubrey.

Grave

Grave as were her thoughts this morning, she could not be insensible to the ludicrous of this scene; and having about her a little of that common alloy of human perfection, a keen relish for a little innocent mischief, she was resolved not to help the valorous captain out of his oratorical quagmire. ‘ Surely,’ thought she, as he again applied his handkerchief, till he was in danger of making his nose bleed, ‘ this must be the reality of what Mr. Sterling used to call a *local impudence*—this man was almost insulting me just now in the house; and now, he seems afraid to speak to me. If all gay men, as they are called, are like this *preux chevalier*, what must women be who are ensnared by them? it must be themselves who are their own seducers. I shall have no patience with the man. I shall run away. I am rather in a hurry, Sir.’

‘ I say, Miss Aubrey, what is it I have done to make you watch me so?’

‘ I cannot tell you why I watch you *so*, Sir. I can only say I do not watch you *at all*.’

‘ Yes, you do; you watch me and Miss Strangeways’.

‘ Now you say something I can admit and answer. I certainly do watch *for* her, and perhaps my explaining my reasons on that point, may convince you that it is *for her* alone that I watch.’

‘ Will you have the goodness to inform me what those reasons are, which, by explaining one thing, are to convince me you do not do another.’

‘ Certainly, Sir; Miss Strangeways associates with those who are so kind as to notice me: she
has

has told me how very uncomfortably she is situated here; nay, she has even confessed, voluntarily confessed to me the little foibles of her mind: she is, I believe, innocent and good humored. I am sure she is vain and imprudent:—she shews too much respect for the world, in my opinion, by being the one, and too much confidence in it, by being the other. A most illiberal, a most uncharitable slander has been surmised against her: unconscious of it, and really not supposing the world could be so wicked, she has not had the means of correcting her conduct. I am of a more serious character than she is. I was uneasy for her. I feared she would make herself misunderstood, and therefore, unwilling to give her pain, I have, as *you* say, watched her, or as *I* say, watched *for* her. If I have seemed to direct my attention to any one else, it could only be because I feared their adding to that self-opinion which is too predominant in her; but I am now perfectly at ease about her; for I have told her the unvarnished truth. I have prevailed on her to see how much her levity degrades her; and though it has wounded her more deeply than I intended, the sterling worth she has shewn, has repaid me. She is now writing, more earnestly than ever, to her father; and if he cannot come down directly, her mother will.’

‘ You have advised this measure, have you, Miss Aubrey?’

‘ I left her to act as she pleased; and it was her own prudent choice; she likes the place; ’tis pity she should be driven from it by her own little folly,
but

but it is of more importance than she is aware of, not only to preserve her estimation, but to increase it : she is very much to be pitied, and equally to be respected.'

'But still I must say,—don't walk so fast;—turn back a little way;—still, I must say, I perceive you have particularly levelled at *me* in your guardianship of her. What have you seen in me to procure me the honor of this peculiar regard?'

'Captain Trenchwell,' replied she firmly, 'you certainly would embarrass me extremely, if I had now to decide on what I ought to do: you really leave me scarcely an option; and you must forgive me, if you hear the truth. I am sure you are not always what I saw you this morning; you are not *always* deficient in the qualities of a gentleman; you do not *always* triumph in the distress you occasion an unassuming female; but, I believe, there is a sort of pleasure,—you must not expect me to understand in what it can consist,—in helping a silly woman to become more silly. This pleasure, I think, you seek in your acquaintance with Miss Strangeways. It cannot add to her or your respectability: it may be very injurious to her's; therefore I confess, and I am sure you will think me right, that I have advised her not to listen to you. She seems scarcely to know she has done so; but she is disposed to be advised; and if you perceive her now more on her guard, you will know to what to impute it; and you will, I persuade myself you will, have that honorable consideration for her, that will induce you to conform to her manners.'

'Say

‘ Say no more, for God’s sake, my dear madam : I shall respect you, as long as I live. I leave Brighton to-morrow morning.’—‘ So soon?’—‘ Yes, I have particular business in town. Can I do any for you? Good morning. God bless you. I shall respect you as long as I breathe.’

It was very early in the agreeable friendship Mrs. Mammon had formed with Lady Luxmore, that she persuaded herself, by means of the reflective powers of her experience, and the perspective assistance of her imagination, of the existing attachment of Lord Portargis and Gertrude. She had, by force of her own natural logic, brought this to be a matter of moral certainty; for she had perceived that they were two young persons more than usually near in age; neither of them seemed to have any other claim on their affections or attentions : Lord Portargis was at home, and often seen with Miss Aubrey : Miss Aubrey was a poor dependent on the family, consequently must be greedy and artful; she must have drawn in the young man, who being very handsome, she must, of necessity, be desperately in love with him, which very much accounted for the seriousness, nay almost the melancholy of her character.

The next step after this decision, was to send to that excellent ‘ O ! most excellent young man !’ Mr. Reynardson, whom she had known ever since the first week of her arrival at Brighton—a note with her ‘ compliments,’ and a request that ‘ he would allow her a place in his curricule the next time

time he drove out, as she had a little particular business on which she wished to consult him. The accommodation was offered that day; and she soon got out of him all he knew, or could surmise, respecting the viscount and Gertrude, more than enough to convince her that she was right as to the subsisting fact; but as to the event, Mr. Reynardson informed her, he was dubious, and inclined to think the least mention of any such partiality on the part of his friend Portargis, would prove the ruin of the young woman, for whom, he confessed, he felt more concern than she could claim, as he was well convinced he was not honored with her good opinion; but she was a very respectable girl, and he had done what he could to serve her, foreseeing that a time would come when she must be turned out by 'that infernal hag' Lady Luxmore, penniless and friendless, and so ignorant that she must starve, if poverty could not subdue her spirit. When he first knew her, he declared, as far as he could discover, she had no one accomplishment. To all the questions he had ever asked her, she always answered 'No, no:—she would not play or sing; she could not draw; she did not ride; he doubted if she had ever seen a play or an opera; she never danced reels; in short, there was no bottom to her ignorance; and out of mere pity, he had asked Lady Elma to take some pains with her.

This modest display of poor Gertrude's deficiencies and his endeavors, naturally produced acknowledgments of superior goodness, and commendations of unprecedented benevolence; and Mrs. Mammon proceeded

proceeded to ask his opinion on the *propriety* of the supposed attachment: he could give none that was not unfavorable to it; they agreed that it was setting Portargis down for life, shutting out all his friends, and putting it out of his power to assist any one; they foresaw that he must, in six months, be weary of a woman who had so little to charm or to amuse, that he must repent 'in sackcloth and ashes' his precipitation, and in short, that, as Sir Philip Lorimer observed, 'the sister of Lady Paula de Hautefort, the elegant, the accomplished, the fascinating Lady Caroline, was the woman for him: she was, to be sure, a few years older, and she had no money; but her mother, Lady Waveney was as good a creature as ever lived, and Lady Caroline was a most charming woman.'

' 'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful,' that good pains should ever be thrown away; but it must be confessed, that in the present instance, Mrs. Mammon's cares and exertions, so far as regarded Gertrude, were superfluous. Would she but have trusted to the operation of chance, or had she really known the human heart in all its vagaries, she would have flattered herself that though Time is indeed one of

' The mighty two

' That bring our wishes nearer to our view.'

Yet that exercising something similar to the *ad libitum* of a Greek aorist, he occasionally does just the contrary; and so it was in the present case; for, however silent we have been on the subject, as not wishing to confirm a disagreeable suspicion,

sorry

sorry are we to say, that Viscount Portargis had not been one fortnight in possession of that concurrence he had so ardently sought, and of which he had so totally despaired, before he began to wonder how he could think it *absolutely necessary* to his happiness; and having proceeded thus far on the declivity of indifference, his projectile and centripetal progress may be calculated.

Without any endeavor on the part of any one to convince him of his error, and left solely to his own feelings, he, for a few days, had rejoiced in being rid of the anxiety he had suffered to torment him; for a few days more, he felt quietly and calmly settled in the possession of that which was to be the root, the stem, the branches, and the fruit of his happiness for life; his next feeling was a sort of interrogation, whether it was well to see thus early all the prospect before him; he had, it was true, escaped all the apprehended disasters of his mind's journey; it was all a bowling road before him; but it was strait and flat, and he had, only to perform so many miles on it each day; it was Newmarket heath without Newmarket's attraction. He could not, perhaps, embody these ideas as accurately as we have done; but if he did not think as deeply as we do as to causes, he was far more sensible than we can be, to effects. In one of his fits of *ennui*, he was surprised that he ever thought Gertrude not *rather plain*;—in the next, she certainly was not near so *amusing* as she used to be; she grew very *dull*: when compared with 'the nice girls' at Brighton she was positively *flat*—there was a *same-*

ness

ness about her, that he wondered had not sooner wearied him; how should he get on? and her perpetual *industry* was really quite sordid; she never had half an hour to spare, as other women had; then her *dress* was 'so excessively' plain; she looked like a quaker; nothing but white, white, white! or a little buff or pink-striped thing in a morning. She would buy nothing but what was necessary; and what he gave her she would not wear; he had given three guineas and a half for a glass to wear round her neck; and she had made him take it back to the goldsmith's, because, truly, she was longer-sighted than any body else—just as if fashion did not require a glass, as much as the eyes. Every lady had a Maltese cross: he had given ten guineas for one; he never saw it: there was something very disagreeable in all this. Purple parasols were the fashion; she had a green one; all women, *of any style*, had slippers with silver clasps; she had none; and when he spoke on the subject, she always stopt him, by bidding him recollect that she was a beggar. All this had something so sordid in it; he did not, indeed, know how, but somehow or other, she surely might manage better; other young women contrived to have their own way, why could not she? she had only to exert a spirit, and defy Lady Luxmore, and she knew they would all stand by her.

Perhaps, as her reasons were unanswerable, as her conduct was laudable, and her intentions were pure, the excuses she framed for her submission to circumstances, might have found their way to the
comprehension

comprehension of the viscount, and have obtained his assent, or at least his acquiescence, had not an irresistible dread lest he might be doing wrong in the eyes of the world, seised him. His friend, the Marquis of Sowsorrow, had just made 'an arrangement' which his family indeed condemned, and for which they were worrying the good fellow out of his senses; he had told him all his reasons, and had proved to him so clearly that every man who marries *must* be ruined, that he could not but wish he had taken a little more time to think about it.' The marquis had, indeed, most eloquently supported his own choice of an infamous connexion, and had informed his less-experienced friend, that 'for merely twelve-hundred a year, a table, a carriage, and servants,' he had engaged Madame du Caffé; whereas had he married, he must have been 'tied up by articles to the Lord only knew what;' that 'in a job' there was the most perfect liberty, not only of parting on any difference, but liberty in every point. A family, which a man was not obliged to bring forward, were easily provided for. Places in public situations were always to be had for boys, and girls could be sent out to India, with no trouble and scarce any expence; a man had his own company, kept his own hours, and in short, thus, and thus only, could be said to be his own master.' Portargis had half a mind to inform Gertrude, in a distant way, of the marquis's opinions, but he had heard her read, since their engagement; and he had seen the tears drop from her eyes, as she read those lines which perhaps have never yet been duly appreciated, as
to

to their moral merit, and the credit of which is not always given to their real author :

‘ Thou wretch——

Quite lost to life as lost to love ;

Whene’er misfortune comes, how just !

And come misfortune surely must.

In the dread season of dismay,

In that sad hour of trial, say,

Who then shall prop thy sinking heart ?

Who bear affliction’s weightier part ?

Say, when the black-brow’d welkin bends,

And winter’s gloomy form impends,

To mourning turns all transient cheer,

And blasts the melancholy year ;—

For times at no persuasion stay,

Nor vice can find perpetual May ;

Then where’s that tongue by folly fed ?

That soul of pertness whither fled ?

Allshrunken within thy lonely nest,

Forlorn, abandon’d, and unblest,

No friend by cordial bonds allied,

Shall seek thy cold unsocial side,

No chirping prattlers, to delight

Shall turn the long-enduring night ;

Nor bride her words of balm impart,

And warm thee at her constant heart.’

There was slender hope of attention from a mind ‘ thus illiberally prejudiced ;’ so his lordship kept to himself the counsels of his friend Sowsorrow, with no abatement, however, of their estimation, and very much inclined to ‘ be prudent.’

From Lady Elma, the viscount’s attachment

ould receive no support:—every day her ladyship was more convinced, by Gertrude's steady, calm, prudent regard to the future, and the lowliness of her yet dignified deportment, that she had nothing to apprehend: yet this freedom from anxiety was not invariable: it was rather a certainty she wished for, than a truth she must confess. She was in the habit of saying, in a jesting way, that she could never give up Portargis to any one; but that which was jest to the ear of her auditors, was serious in the mouth of the speaker. The viscount was, in general, sufficiently attentive to secure her favor; and she meant he should continue to deserve it: a correspondence in prose and poetry, served to fan the flame; but Gertrude was no longer called to assist in his lordship's replies: nor were the lady's billets communicated to her. Mystery succeeded to frankness: the viscount reserved these favors for his private perusal; and though perfectly unshackled by any movement on the part of Gertrude, it was soon evident that he wished her absent when he received them: they however, and all other coquettish offerings to the young man's vanity, met encouragement from the earl, when he called on his son to be grateful for 'the most useful friendship in the world, that of an elegant woman.' This sanction gave Lady Elma unlimited scope, and removed every necessity of caution or concealment; yet as if 'to make assurance double sure,' she could not forbear lamenting to Gertrude that Portargis was so frivolous a character;

character ; and when Gertrude concurred in wishing him less so, her ladyship was satisfied that she had no cause to fear the still-life of that good girl, 'almost too good for this world,' Gertrude Aubrey.

CHAPTER LXV.

A match for an earl's daughter ! A match not for an earl's son. A horse-man's oratory. A genuine anecdote. Consulting the oracle at his lodgings. The oracle ruminates. Dissertation on cunning. Various states of mind in various subjects. A drawing-room party. The oracle's decision. How to get off from a promise. Wearing the willow.

A VERY short time, assisted by the young lady's own endeavors, had united the interests of Sir Philip Lorimer and Lady Paula de Hautefort. Nothing is so easy as to 'get off' at a watering place, if you have but set your mind on it, and are resolved to clear hedge and ditch. Lady Caroline had been useful to her elder sister, in this laudable undertaking, notwithstanding her former aversion to Sir Philip :—aversions will sometimes give way to prudence ;—and very slight hints sufficed, where there was such activity of comprehension, to inform the baronet how he might please and oblige the ladies. Into this service, Mrs. Mammon had intruded herself ; and fully persuaded of the arranged plan between the viscount and Gertrude, she called on all the powers of Brighton, except Neptune and his Amphitrite, who to do them justice would have been ashamed of the job, to assist in preventing 'that divine young man' from 'so cruelly' throwing himself away, 'on something not

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much.

much above the rank of a servant.' The next time, therefore, that Sir Philip crossed on Portargis, he took him under the arm; and telling him he wanted to give him a little good advice, the viscount walked aside with him, perhaps induced by the persuasion that what was promised was that from which he was most secure. He began

' Port, I have a devilish regard for you ; and it makes me cursed sorry to see you so down in the mouth.'

' Me?'

' Yes, you. Come, don't tip me any of your girl's tricks. I know what I say, man. You're in love, and in love with that there Miss Garty, what's-her-name? I never can remember low people's names. I can remember titles fast enough, if they're ever so hard—but names always puzzle me. But as I say, don't interrupt me till I've done. Now seriously, Port, were a soul upon earth to know that you ever cast an eye, that is, in the way of marriage, on your mother's fondling, you'd be in a quagmire, and I defy all the black Staffordshires in the kingdom to pull you out. Nothing on this side **, is so bad as a low match; you may flounder for ever, and never get out. That's just my reason for taking Polla: she has very little fortune, and you see, as Captain Megan says, she's no beauty—she's a good deal, I think, awry, but she shews a deal of blood, and has good action: Caroline now, is a deal more powerful, and I am sure above a hand higher, but we must not pick and chuse; and Polla likes my person and accomplishments

plishments, I understand—so, I think, I shall e'en take her: her brother Lord Graveney, no—Graveney? Graveney? no Waveney, I think it is, will take me by the hand, and bring me into parliament instantly. Now, Caroline, I think, my dear friend, would be just the *Toprag* for you, as we say; she is just cut and dried for you. I think, upon my soul, she likes you; monstrously, I think, by what I hear; get the matter settled, I say, as quick as you can, and then you may have what money you will of me, between this and the old gentleman's walking off to kingdom come *.

Even in listening thus long, Lord Portargis had given currency to an opinion that rendered his situation public: he knew not what to do or say: he was convinced that, if he regarded Gertrude's wish

* Let no one bestow on us the praise of inventing elegant phrases: we never work without a pattern; and a very little observation will afford an abundant choice. In the present instance, we borrow from a member of one of our universities, and the tutor of a nobleman. In the one interview with which he favored us, may it never again be repeated! he was introduced at a dinner-party, and, in the few minutes between his arrival and the assembling at table, he desired us to show him our little library, saying 'I always judge of women by their books:'. seeing the voluminous works of a near relation, he asked if 'it was a good thing,' and perceiving Mrs. Hannah More's publications on our shelves, he asked our opinion of her as a writer. We replied, with our usual adherence to truth, that we thought her a woman of the first class of powers. 'What?' he replied, 'I suppose you like her because she writes about 'Kingdom come.' We are happy to say, we forget the gentleman's name, therefore he is not obliged to our concealment.

or even her necessary comfort, he ought to mislead Sir Philip out of his preconceived idea; and that if he felt for her what he had so recently professed and urged her to believe, he ought to crush, in the first effort towards existence, an offer so militating against his honor and his conscience; but chilled affection makes a tepid heart; and feeling nothing but his embarrassment, and having nothing to bring forward but his good breeding, he took off his glove, shook hands with the baronet, and saying ‘Allow me to quit you just now; you shall hear from me,’ he walked a quarter of a mile farther from the town, holding his glove in his hand, and lashing with it all those rare productions of the South Downs, which presume to start eighteen inches from the soil. This was the resource of deep thought, not of want of thought;—his lordship could not whistle.

At the end of this walk, which was bounded only by the time of his brain’s chymical projection, he found he had nothing ‘upon earth’ to do but to consult his friend Sylvanus. He felt that he could not apply to Lady Elma. No matter that this was just what Gertrude would have deprecated; he had no alternative, and her injunction was rendered, by this exigency, null and void; it was saying to a starving man, ‘Shun the butcher and the baker:’—go he must.

And go he did; and he found his friend at home with a cold, much in want of something to occupy his mind, which was just then awkwardly disposed to ruminate on a dishonored bill with which he had
tried

tried to get out of debt for his carriage ; he was seated in the drawing-room of his lodgings—for he had a *protégée* inadmissible in a boarding-house,—before the fire, which his cold made a comfort, with one foot on each side the stove-grate, and whistling ‘Cupid god of soft persuasion,’ when the viscount, taking the privilege of friendship, kicked open the door ; and something, he could not well tell what, but it was in rose-color, and had a train, glided out at another door at the same moment.

Had Portargis been naturally ever so curious to know what it was in rose-color, and with a train, that glided out, he was not then in a mood to be inquisitive. His friend’s countenance was a little suffused ; and if the intruder had been any one below the rank of Portargis, he might perhaps have regretted that ‘his people’ were not in the way, to show him up ; but as matters stood, he thought it best to bring forward the question himself ; and he would presently have told to whom the rose-color and the train belonged, had not Portargis evinced a mind as little at ease to listen, as edged to ask. He was therefore saved from this painful office, if the exposure of follies and vices ; where they expected neither check nor reproach, could be painful.

His lordship intimating that he had some very serious business to talk over, entered on it by a full disclosure of the situation in which he had placed himself with regard to Gertrude, and the doubts which had subsequently arisen in his mind as to the prudence of the part he had acted : he professed himself as still possessing the highest esteem for

Miss

Miss Aubrey, but he wanted the advice of somebody as to 'what was most eligible in such a dilemma.'

Reynardson was now master of the fact; and though he felt a little natural resentment of the partial confidence he had been allowed, and the liberty the viscount had assumed of acting for himself, he repressed all this, and turned it into regret for the embarrassment this independence had produced. My dear fellow, why, in God's name, would you think of going on at this rate, without naming the subject to me*? I would have put you in a much better method: I vow I do not see what is to be done. As to any advice or opinion from me, it all comes, I fear, now too late.'

'Is that three?' said the viscount, hearing the clock strike; 'I promised to ride with the De Hauteforts. I must be off. When can I see you? Shall you be at my mother's this evening?'

An affirmative enabled Lord Portargis to keep his appointment; and Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson, having first called in the something in rose-color with a train to it, and then sent his right honorable friend to the antipodes for a fool and a blockhead, sat down to consider what advice he should give

* It is not at all out of drawing, that Mr. Reynardson, *nullius vel terræ filius* should use this language to the legitimate son of an English earl. When the late Lord R——, then chancellor, had his pocket picked at the levee, a Bow-street officer asked him 'how he could be such a *gig* as to go without him.'

him that would get him out of his *dilemma*, and reserve him, in some measure, for his own picking.

But embarrassed as he was, there was, however, some consolation and encouragement in seeing that caprice had done precisely what he wished and could not attempt: his work was more than half done for him: whenever his suspicions had revived and suggested to him the necessity of acting, he had felt the want of foundation for the engine he must use; but now there was no question of foundation or engine. The rocking tower of constancy was mouldering of itself, and it now nodded to its fall, without the least danger to himself, or any necessity of his getting out of its reach.

The advantages of this change, and the comfort derived from the certainty of it, were not tardy in presenting themselves to his imagination. He told himself, and he was right, that any plan his friend might hereafter pursue, was better than that which he was now relinquishing. Where a man acted without an agent, there could be no brokage; and he could now take care, at least he thought so, that a successor to the deserted nymph should be of his own appointment. Cares, of kin to those of the high order called parental, now invaded his philanthropic bosom; he felt that he had a wonderfully increased regard for his friend Portargis; and he turned over in his mind those plans of life which he thought, were fittest for him: he was resolved on pushing him into the army by all means, and for many reasons; but on any thing farther, he could not instantly, in the consequent tumult of novel information,

formation, decide. His mind now naturally reverted to the danger he had escaped, and which, till the viscount unbosomed himself, he had not known to be so imminent: he looked on the rocks, and sands, and shoals he had passed, and was almost thankful. Even if his friend should again do a foolish thing, and involve his affections, there was experienced caprice to rely on; and nothing could be so much to be dreaded as the danger just averted. Quiet and retired as was Gertrude's character, much more was to be apprehended that was hostile to his interests, from her, than from any other wife that his friend could chuse. She was at leisure to observe, because she was not occupied with herself; and that she had powers of discrimination, he saw in her countenance, and fancied he felt, even in her politeness to him. She gave no hope of being governed, for she governed herself; and there was no chance of deceiving her, because she had but one standard of judgment, and that was the test of truth, established on the principles of revelation. She was proof against flattery; for she knew herself, and was more likely to be humbled than elevated by undue praise. Instead of existing in forms, he perceived that her code of *etiquette* was short enough to be always in her memory, and that its simplicity, while it made it applicable to all purposes, rendered its practice perfectly easy. On hearing, by ceremonial compulsion, a sermon on the text that inculcates justice, mercy, and humility, as all required of those whose minds were to be prepared for the greatest event the world ever witnessed,

nessed, he was almost prompted, as if let into a secret, to tell his friend that he had found *the recipe for her character, the figure of her dance, the pattern of her conduct*, or whatever else would have intimated the developement of a mystery; but fearing the quotation might involve him in a charge of methodism, he kept his discovery to himself, only resolving, to his own satisfaction, that a woman who did justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly, would never suit his views, should she become the wife of his friend.

As in some measure the co-adjutor of Lady Elma, in the usual course of business, he might now have sought to confer with her on the subject; but the viscount had particularly deprecated any communication with her on it; and as it suited Mr. Reynardson's plans to adhere to the promise demanded of him, he did not break it. A designing party soon becomes a set of unconnected individuals—self-interest has no adhesion; and amongst the crafty, every one shifts for himself. The guardianship of Portargis seemed now offered; and the acute Sylvanus chose to consider it as a clear vacancy: the influence of Lady Elma, though not so formidable as that of Gertrude, he had no wish either to increase, confirm, or acknowledge, therefore he felt no reluctance to act without an associate; and the affection her ladyship manifested for the dependent girl, made him somewhat doubt her concurring in a plan against her.

"Tis much to be lamented, that no ingenious writer has yet stept forth, to recommend, to improve,

prove, and to adapt to the present instant, that minor system of politics denominated cunning. The requisite accomplishments, and the demanded duties of ambassadors, have been explained till the world has cried ‘Drop the curtain.’ How to succeed in the world of power and ambition—how to make loathsome vices contribute to bribe Fortune, has been taught by high and elegant authority; but nobody has yet been kind enough to write down to the comprehension of the *tyro*, in mere worldly cunning, unless that can be called instruction in cunning, which teaches only the nature of the human mind, and resolves all its motions into pure selfishness. If this be the grammar of cunning, we have only to purchase Rochefoucault.

But the daily and hourly experience which shews us the grievous mistakes, the sad blunders, the fatal errors committed by the cunning, proves that the world wants to go to school: the cunning, even in this age of chymistry and metaphysics, are no better prepared for their duties than they were when they first persuaded men to disbelieve the incontrovertible principles of religion. They still lay snares for themselves, and fall into their own traps. Surely, all this ought to be amended amongst persons who are very much given to boast a monopoly of wisdom. Had a proper education in the science, preceded Mr. Sylvanus Reynardson’s deliberation on the distress of his friend, he would not have suffered any doubt of Lady Elma’s views, sentiments, or concurrence to intrude: he would have given a limited credit to her professions of regard,

regard, and would have understood them, as they were, perfectly sincere,—where there was no competition: he would have recognized her ladyship as of the most dignified class of the cunning, and would have been made diligent by recollecting that the present hour bounds the horizon of this description of wise persons: he knew, indeed, by frequenting the elegant pigeon-holes of the exotic theatre in an evening, and being admitted to comment in sunset-morning-visits, not merely on the aliment found there, but the cooings whispered there—that a vain woman is always a selfish woman, and that there is no folly, no meanness, no cruelty which can surprise the world, when it is traced up to the paltry, the dishonest wish to rise by the depression of another. He would have known, that to look forward steadily to the comforts and consolations remaining to future years, never entered the imagination of her who lives on the ephemeral nutriment of this day's triumph; that to talk of the calm happiness resulting from reflected goodness, and supported by the attachment of a rising generation, is to present hieroglyphics in Marybone, and that to suppose Lady Elma De Ruse would forbear her interference, because she might repent her efforts, on seeing the ruin of an innocent girl's fair prospect, would be tantamount to expecting Lord Laststake would throw down the dice-box, because he would not quite ruin his wife and children.

But had he made the experiment, he would have been puzzled. With point, quint, and quaterze in his hand, he would have complained that he

had not *spadille*; for looking only on one scale, and waiting to see it pop down with a decided opinion, he would have been astonished to see the balance almost equally adjusted. He would not have altered his opinion that the 'suit and service' of a boy bear a high price in the estimation of vanity, and compensate for expensive sacrifices; but he would have heard Lady Elma profess, in terms which her undisturbed feelings justified, the most cordial affection and esteem for Gatty Aubrey; and—because she had no confidence in her hearer—the impossibility of her sanctioning any thing hostile even to the wishes or the vanity of one so entirely at the mercy of the world:—she might,—because she thought the matter in her own power, have tried to laugh at the idea of serious attachment; but if he had questioned the ground on which she placed her infidelity, she would have had nothing to answer but—'*Me voici.*'

If others were imperfect in cunning, Gertrude was no less to be taught in the school of *possibilities*. She ought, at the moment when she felt most obliged to Portargis for his caution, and best satisfied with his deportment, to have known—but how, poor girl! could she know it?—that her hopes of a coronet, if she ever had any, had passed their *acme*. It was not in the viscount's nature to be moderate; hope, enjoyment, and regret succeeded each other, with the accuracy, and in all the mixt hues of the prismatic colors: hope protracted, became impatience increased by procrastination;

tination; enjoyment was short, in proportion to its business; and regret was bounded only by the distance of the next hope. His passage through life was a succession of *glaciers*, of which no one had an apex that allowed his foot to rest.

But though this was visible, as has been said, in the first fortnight of his ratified engagement, it required a longer period to address it to the optic faculties of Gertrude's mind; and the first suspicion, and that far short of conviction, reached it at the moment when, surely with some claim to praise, she was setting out on the task assigned her of sobering Miss Strangeways.

Such an idea, however, once having found access to her mind, was a species of leaven that could not be again extracted. Having done all that circumstances at present demanded, or permitted for her charge, she felt either that she had a right to indulge some thought for herself, or that it was impossible to exclude it. The mind must have been stoical, even to apathy, that could remain unconcerned in such vicissitude; and blessings could have made no impression on a heart insensible to the convulsions of social life. It was a subject on which it was 'damning proof' to ruminate. Every hour served to convince her of that which she was resolved to confine to her own observation.

If any doubt could subsist, before Mr. Reynardson had given his opinion, it would all have been done away after the evening, when his cold having given way to his morning cares, he kept his appointment

pointment by 'shewing himself' at Lady Luxmore's party. The viscount took care to be near him all the short time of his stay; and at length, after an agonising eight minutes and a half of suspense, his fate, or rather Gertrude's, seemed on the lips of the oracle, who leaning one elbow on the chimney-piece, and crossing one foot over the other, in a very good attitude, with the other hand turned over in his pocket, pretty nearly the whole of his worldly possessions, consisting of three half-crowns, one shilling and a sixpence. If, to save him from the charge of poverty, we recount any thing or things that he *called* his, we should err: that which is not paid for, is very seldom our own.

It required a sort of Spartan compression of the subject, to direct the dubious viscount, and not inform the company. Mr. Sylvanus, not having much choice of time, took that when in obedience to Lady Elma, Gertrude was acknowledging her ladyship's talents, and her personal obligation to them, by singing to the scientific accompaniment of her instructress, the pathetic air, 'O! Nanny.' The Lady de Hauteforts had quizzed: good Lady Waveney, their mother, had encouraged: Sir Philip Lorimer had vowed, before God, the girl sung well, but he was sure his Polla would beat her hollow: Mrs. Mammon had smiled, and *grimaced*: Miss Strangeways had just finished a sentence with — 'her accomplishments are the least part of her merit: if you did but know what a heart she has!

when Reynardson perceiving the viscount, notwithstanding his wish to be freed, much inclined to listen and to feel, repeating his preamble, laid hold on his button, and thus securing him from starting, gave him his reply: ‘ You can do nothing in this cursed scrape, but let the affair die away: take no more notice, and get away from this Hell upon earth, as soon as you can. I am devilish hard run for fifty pounds; will you breakfast with me to-morrow?’

This occurred on the third day after Gertrude’s confidential interview with Miss Strangeways; and as she had, out of regard to appearances, for her sake, continued the practice of walking before breakfast with her, she had had no opportunity of trying how much of inclination the viscount retained to give up this hour to her; but on the day following that of Lady Luxmore’s party, Mr. Strangeways arrived, and Gertrude’s cares in that quarter ended: his first visit was to her; and the countess being absent, he proved, at once, by his expressions, the integrity with which Miss Strangeways had stated her own folly, and her sense of that kindness which had saved her from the consequences attached to it.

At the first opportunity, in the course of the same day, Gertrude informed the viscount, that she was now at liberty to avail herself again of his kindness: ‘ What kindness?’ ‘ Will you not go on in teaching me Latin?’—‘ Upon my word, I think you might employ your time more to your own satisfaction: you will find it an immense

mense labor. I am sure *I* did ; but still, if you chuse it—to-morrow, indeed, I must be out early, and the next day I am engaged ; and Saturday, I believe—you see, not expecting you to be dismissed—I am afraid I have promised myself. If I *can* get off, and you wish it, I will ; but really, I think these fine mornings you should walk.—Gertrude paused for a moment, and turned away in silence. The viscount did not understand pauses. She quitted the room. He was too well bred to stop her : she went to her chamber. He did not interrupt her : they met no more till the dinner-hour the next day.

Did she not now repent the little encouragement she had given him ?—No : she would have said, had the question been put to her, that the flame which needed fanning thus early, must soon expire, in spite of any effort she could have made.

But did she not revolve in her mind the most probable means of recalling his departing passion ? Surely in such an exigency, she had only to write to him a few lines, which any servant would have put into his hand, involving her in no other suspicion than that of carrying on an illicit correspondence. She had only to say, in her own language, that she was unhappy, or in that of the poet,

‘ What shall I do to win my lord again ?’

and his heart, ever obedient to every impulse, would have flown to her. He would have returned an answer by his confidential friend, the earl’s va-

let, who would only have concluded that he had now both the lovers in his power ; and the pretty French device of Cupid-Pilot, steering by the polar star, with the motto, ‘ Sans vous, je peris,’ would have saved the necessity of breaking the seal.

But no. Gatty Aubrey was not ‘ the sort of girl’ for this practical romance. She could love, and most tenderly ; she could conceal that love, and she could govern it, by bringing against it her sense of duty, and her confidence in the approbation of a Power whom her heart felt and acknowledged : she could have bestowed a rational and firm affection on one whom a sensation of almost natural instinct, gratitude, and something like compassion, had made the object of a sisterly regard. She could have sacrificed her own present comfort to him, in hopes that the latter years of life would have repaid her by shewing him deserving of respect and esteem ; and as it was the wish of himself and his father, that she should rise to a situation far above that in which her birth had placed her, she had gratefully, and humbly accepted the distinction.

But how was a creature, no better endowed than Gertrude, to contribute to the happiness of so distinguished a character as Viscount Portargis ?—That she might make him happy, his happiness should have been within her reach. In what did it consist ? Did it consist in active or contemplative virtue ? Was it likely to communicate itself to the world in the defence of his country, or the regulations

regulations of its morals? Was he to lead in the army or the senate? Was he to set an example of virtue on a smaller scale? Was he to shame conjugal licentiousness, or rear an offspring to prosecute his plans of beneficence? No, no; his happiness was seated in the shape and color of his horses: his active exertions were to take for their mark a fly on the leader's ear, his contemplative faculties were to tend to the complication of mechanical absurdity on two wheels or on four, to the improved cut of his boot-top, or the adjusted altitude of his collar. His spirit of defence might lead him to a duel: his regulations might be seen in his stables or his kennel. *To lead* in no way was he formed: *to be led* he seemed doomed. At home what could she expect? she must plant virtue: she must prepare the soil: nay, she must disencumber it of its weedy vegetation: she must endeavor to trace, amongst ruins inclosed by stagnant pools of folly and idleness, the original once lovely work of nature, and its improvements under Mr. Sydenham's care, now all defaced, if not annihilated, by the quackery of Abbé Bonfront, the sub-lessons of his *select* pupils, the *good advice* of every one who had taken the trouble to inform the noble novice, the friendship of Mr. Reynardson, the practical example of the Marquis of Sowsorrow, and the encouragement of male and female nonsense in fifty others who had come in his way.

For all that a husband thus gifted might call on her to endure, and all that her interest for him might command her to do, she was, indeed, trained

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ed by early adversity, and by the coercions to which she was, we may almost say, born; but it must have been atchieved by a great reduction of the share of peace to which every creature, who prizes it, is entitled. She had a wondrous dislike to that engine of arbitrary government, called caprice, and an equal dread of turbulent passions. She never could find the path of duty wide enough to admit of the serpentine track which childish humors and obstinate self-will fancy they can trace; and in the endeavor to subjugate her own temper, she had not acquired any inclination to contend with that of another. To perform the duties of her situation, whatever it might be, with a quiet steadiness, was her plan of domestic policy; and to acquit herself in this life, so as not to forfeit her hopes in another, was the height of her ambition—a sad groveling spirit, it must be confessed!

Every day brought its negative proof of the state of the viscount's mind; and she was obliged often to call to her recollection the comforting truth that her situation was no worse than before these false hopes flattered her. Unwilling as she had been to admit them, she could not but consider them when they presented themselves, as deciding at least, the anxious question, 'How am I to subsist?' yet the terms on which they were to be accepted, bore with them such sobering considerations, that she felt in renouncing them, some counterpoising relief: 'I shall now,' thought she, 'indeed, be to seek a provision; and I must probably work for my daily bread; but still I shall have no dread of
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what I may suffer from an indissoluble connection : if I have few comforts, I shall have fewer disquiets ; and all persons are not unhappy who are dependent : did I not love Portargis, I might be happier with him as his wife ; but every folly he is guilty of, would be a double misery to me : if I am not imprudent myself, I may hope to escape misery.’

Consoling herself in this way, she, in silence submitted to what appeared her fate, and confined all her observations to her own bosom. She endeavored to make no change in any part of her behavior to any one, and sincerely hoped none was perceptible.

One circumstance which she had not shrewdness enough to trace to its real source, gave her pleasure. The earl’s health improved daily ; his cheerfulness was returning, and nothing could exceed the decorum of his conduct. All the various departures from right and amiable which the countess contrived to exhibit, he bore with good breeding and condescension : his temper seemed entirely out of her reach, and he was uniformly civil to her. She had every indulgence : she was made of as much consequence as her character would admit, and as long as the toys and rattles of the place addressed themselves to the grasp of her pride, she was endurable : vexations disturbed her ; but on the whole, she was far easier to live with. Gertrude felt the change gratefully, and equally conducive to her comfort was another almost as extraordinary, produced in herself, and amounting in her judgment nearly to absurdity. She could not

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well tell why, but her own cheerfulness was increasing; she did not sigh as when she thought on her approaching exaltation: she had lost many unpleasant feelings;—it was very odd.

END OF VOLUME III.





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